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A B S T R A C T  
Of the most  
Curious and Excellent  
T H O U G H T S  
I N  
*Seigneur de Montaigne's  
ESSAYS:*

Very Useful for Improving the  
Mind, and Forming the Man-  
ners of Men.

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Done into *English* from the  
*French* Original.

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LONDON: Printed for *R. Smith*, at  
the *Angel* and *Bible* without *Temple-*  
*Barr.* 1701.



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design of the cell.

# An Advertisement.

There are few Books so bad, but there is something good to be found in them, and few so perfectly good, but they have some mixture of ill things. Upon this account it was that I have taken the pains to separate the one from the other in the following Abstract which is here Publish'd. Tho Montaigne is an Author whom many have admir'd, yet he has not wanted Censurers ; and, indeed, it can hardly be deny'd, that his Sense is sometimes very doubtful, and his Work is not all of-a-piece ; for Truth and

## Advertisement.

Falshood, Good and Evil, are almost equally scatter'd in it by turns. This proves the Truth of one of his first Thoughts, That there is nothing so various as the Mind of Man. And 'tis not without reason, that he says in another place, speaking of himself and viewing his own Character, I am sometimes Bashful, sometimes Impudent, sometimes a Lyar, sometimes a Sincere Man; I am now Chaste, and anon Lustful; I am Liberal, Prodigal, and Covetous, at times; and this, according to the sudden turns of my Fancy and Inclinations.

I thought therefore it would be a good Design, to cull out and

## Advertisement.

and put together many of the good Maxims in Montaigne's Works, where they are often spoil'd by a mixture of bad Things, or at least stifled under a confus'd heap of Rubbish : For besides the pleasure the present Age takes in Choice and Select Thoughts, the Reader will here find, without any pains or trouble, every thing pick'd out and ready at hand, which may serve either to please or instruct him.

The Thoughts I have put into this Abstract, are, for the most part, not only independent one upon another, but very judicious, and withal entertaining for their variety. They are bold and free, strong and beautiful.

## Advertisement.

close and comprehensive, so witty, and withal so far out of the common Road, that they at once surprize and please us. Some of them are Moral, and some Facetious; some Serious, and some Focose; each in its kind very good, and all in general very useful, To shew a Man to himself, by discovering the most secret Inclinations and Springs of Human Nature, and To frame his Mind to relish the pleasure of vertuous Actions.

As to the manner of Expression, I have carefully follow'd my Author: For Montaigne having a Style, and using certain terms, peculiar to himself, and which give to all he says an Air full of Candor and Simplicity,

## Advertisement.

city, very lively and agreeable, I thought it by no means adviseable to vary from it: And this I did so much the rather, because these Expressions, tho a little ancient, preserve a certain vigour in this Writer's Thoughts, without which they would be but little minded, in an Age so scrupulously Nice as to the Purity of Language, which is now so much affected.

I have only retrench'd or chang'd those Words which are so ancient and obsolete, that besides they are no ways beautiful, they could no more now be understood, by most People, than if they were Greek or.

## Advertisement.

on Latine ; which must needs be very unpleasant to the Reader : Such are Detourbier, Vastite, Admonester, Etriver, &c.

As to the turn of Periods, I have exactly kept to my Author, as I thought it my duty to do ; and if I have sometimes varied from him, 'tis only of such places where it was necessary, to clear the Sense in some Expressions that were not good Grammar, to which Men were not slavishly tied up, in the time of Montaigne, who first Printed his Essays in the Year 1580.

Charles

## Advertisement.

Charles Cotton, Esq; who  
Translated all the Volumes of  
Montaigne, after Mr. Florio,  
observes, " That both of them  
" are to be excus'd where they  
" miss of the Sense of the Au-  
" thor, whose Language is such  
" in many places as Grammar  
" cannot reconcile ; which ren-  
" ders it the hardest Book, to  
" make a justifiable Version of,  
" that I yet ever saw in that or  
" any other Language I under-  
" stand ; insomuch that tho' I  
" do think, and am pretty confi-  
" dent, I understand French  
" as well as many Men, I have  
" yet sometimes been forc'd to  
" grope at his Meaning.

The

## Advertisement.

The Translator of the Abstract here Publish'd, believes that a great many of those places which are hardest to be understood, and rendred into good English, have faln to his share, because this Abstract, for the most part, consists of Sententious Maxims, wherein the Author generally affects a short, obscure, and odd way of expressing his Thoughts: But as he hopes he has always hit upon his true Meaning, at least his Mistakes are neither many, nor considerable; so he has been careful to express the Sense of the Author in plain and Intelligible English. And tho' the manner of the Expression in the

French

## Advertisement.

French is sometimes very uncouth, yet he has so far accommodated himself to it, as to endeavour to keep up to the Spirit of the Author, without losing the Purity and Propriety of our own Language.

BOOKS

AN

~~THE VARIOUS INVENTIONS AT BOSTON~~  
~~AND THEIR USES~~  
**BOOKS Printed for and  
Sold by Richard Smith.**

**THE Mysteries of Opium re-  
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The New Art of rightly Spelling  
and Writing Words by the sound  
thereof ; and of rightly sounding  
and reading Words by the sight  
thereof, applied to the *English*  
Tongue, by J. Jones, M. D.**

**Reflections on our Common  
Failings, Done out of *French*, by  
a Person of Honour.**



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# A B S T R A C T

Of the most Curious and Excellent THOUGHTS

In *Seigneur de Montaigne's*

# E S S A Y S.

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*Of Different Means to Obtain the same End.*

**T**HE most usual Method of pacifying those whom we have offended, is to move them to Pity, by Submission; and yet sometimes a brave, B resolute,

2 *The most Excellent Thoughts*  
resolute, and stubborn Behaviour  
has produc'd the same Effect.

When *Alexander* threatned his  
Captive *Betis* with all sorts of  
Torments, he scorn'd to discover  
the least weakness, by begging any  
favour from him, but remain'd  
olstinate ly silent, and receiv'd his  
Menaces not only with an air of  
assurance and resolution, but of  
fierce and haughty Disdain. This  
behaviour so far provok'd the  
Conqueror, that his Anger was  
now turn'd into Fury; he com-  
manded his Heels to be bor'd  
through, and caus'd him to be  
dragg'd alive at a Cart's-tail, when  
his Body was all mangl'd and dis-  
member'd with the Wounds he  
had receiv'd in Fighting: Whe-  
ther it was that Heroical Courage  
was so natural to *Alexander*, that  
he shew'd the less esteem for it in  
another, because he had no rea-  
son to admire it; or, that he con-  
ceiv'd this Courage to be so much  
his own peculiar Virtue and Glo-  
ry,

ry, that his Pride could not endure to behold it in another. Man is a Subject so wonderfully vain, fickle, and unstable, that 'tis very difficult to form any certain and uniform Judgment about him.

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### Of SORROW.

**S**Orrow is a Passion which the World has endeavour'd to honour, by cloathing it with the goodly Titles of Wisdom, Vertue, and Conscience, which is a foolish and vile disguise. The *Italians* do more truly call it by its proper Name, *Ill-nature*; for, in good troth, it is always a wicked, mean, and base Passion; and therefore the *Stoicks* did particularly forbid their wise-Man to be any ways affected with it.

The Poets feign'd that *Niobe* having first lost seven Sons, and then as many Daughters, was at

last transform'd into a Rock, intending thereby to express that sad Stupidity, which makes us deaf and dumb, and benums all our Senses, when we are oppress'd with the too troublesom Accidents of this Life. And, indeed, the violence of an excessive Grief must of necessity stun the whole Soul, and deprive it of the free use of its Faculties, as it happens to every one upon any sudden alarm of very bad News ; we find our selves surpriz'd, stupify'd, and seiz'd with such a Consternation, as stops all motion, until the Soul, by giving vent to its Grief in Sighs and Tears, seems to disengage and extricate it self from the oppression, and recover in some measure its former Liberty and Ease. All the Passions which suffer themselves to be relish'd and digested, are but moderate.

*How far our Affections transport us.*

WE are never satisfy'd with such things as are within our power, but are always reaching after those that are beyond it. Fear, Desire, and Hope, do forcibly carry us away towards Futurities, and rob us of the sense of what is present, to amuse us with that which shall be, tho not till such time as we shall be no more.

Plato does often inculcate this great Precept, *Do thine own Work, and know thy self.* He that lives by this Rule, knows what is fit for him to do, and will not mistake another's Business for his own: He loves and improves himself above all things; shuns all unprofitable Employment, and confines himself to that only which is proper for him.

6 *The most Excellent Thoughts*

As Folly would never be content, tho' it should enjoy all that it desires, because it would still grasp at such things as are without a Man's reach; so Wisdom is always satisfy'd with its present Enjoyments, because it frees a Man from anxious Care about Future-ties.

The Life of Princes is liable to be examin'd after their Death; for since Justice could not be executed upon their Persons, 'tis but reasonable that it should be done upon their Actions and Reputation. We owe, 'tis true, Submission and Obedience to Kings, whether good or bad, for that respects their Dignity and Office; but as to Esteem and Affection, these are only due to their Merit and Virtue. Let it be granted as necessary for maintaining Order and Government, That we must patiently submit to Princes, how unworthy soever they be; That we must conceal their Vices, and extol

tol their indifferent Actions while their Authority stands in need of our support: But when all Inter-course with them is at an end, and their Relation to us is dissolv'd by Death, there is no reason that we should deny our selves that just Freedom of declaring our true Sentiments about them.

*Livy* does truly observe, That the Language of Men bred up in Princes Courts, is always full of vain Ostentation, and flattering Panegyricks in praise of the Prince.

The *Lacedemonians*, tho otherwise a wise People, us'd one foolish Ceremony at the Interment of their Kings; for then all Degrees of Men and Women cut and slash'd their Foreheads in token of their Sorrow, and with great howling and lamentation proclaim'd, That the King now Dead, tho he had been never so wicked, was the best that ever they had, whereby they attributed to his Dignity the praises that only belong to Merit.

*That the Soul discharges her Passions  
upon false Objects, where the true  
are wanting.*

**A** Gentleman who was often tormented with the Gout, being importun'd by the Physicians to abstain from all manner of Salt Meats, was wont to return them this pleasant Answer, That in the extremity of his Pain he wanted something to quarrel with, and he fancied his Cursing, one while the Saucages, and another the dried Tongues, and the Hams, was some mitigation of his Pain, and gave him a little ease. The Arm that's lifted up to strike, feels pain, if it misses the Object for which the blow was design'd, and spends it self in beating the Air. The fight that is lost and wanders in a vast extent of open Air, wearies it self with this indefinite prospect, until it meet with some Object

Object that terminates and circumscribes it: So it seems that the Soul being shock'd and discompos'd, spends it self upon it self, if it be not furnish'd with some Object whereon to fix; and for want of that which is real and suitable, it creates one that is false and fantastical, tho it knows the same to be so, because it finds more ease and pleasure in deceiving itself with such a false Object, than in wanting one altogether to work upon. The Brute-Beasts in their fury, fall foul upon the Stone or Steel that has wounded them, and with their good Teeth they execute Revenge upon themselves for the hurt they have received from others. These lovely Tresses, fair Lady, which you tear so plentifully, and those delicate white Breasts which you beat so unmercifully, are no ways guilty of killing your beloved Brother; Quarrel then with some thing else.

He was a Comical Philosopher, who seeing a King pull the Hair off his Head for grief, told him with a smiling Countenance, *Does that Man think that Baldness is a remedy for Sorrow?* The unfortunate Gamesters chew the Cards with their Teeth, and swallow down the Dice, in revenge for the loss of their Money. Some quarrel with God himself, after the Example of the *Thracians*, who, when it Thunders or Lightens, fall to shooting against Heaven, as if by the flights of Arrows they intended to reduce the Almighty to Reason.

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### *Of true GENEROSITY.*

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**P**olypercon having advis'd *Alexander* to take the advantage of the Night's Obscurity for attacking *Darius*: By no means, said he, It is not for such a Man as I am to steal a Victory, *Malo-*

*in Sieur Montaigne's Essays.* 11

*me fortunæ pæniteat quam Victoriae  
pudeat, I had rather repent me  
of my Fortune, than be ashamed of  
my Victory.*

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### *Of IDLENESS.*

**A**S we see some Untill'd Grounds, when they are grown ranck and fertile by rest, abound with innumerable sorts of wild Herbs, which therefore must be accustom'd to certain Seeds before we can make any advantage of them: Just so it is with brisk Wits of a Fruitful Invention; for unless they be employ'd on some useful Subject, which may check and restrain them, they run out into a thousand Extravagancies, and wild Freaks of Fancy.

The Soul that has no fixed end to pursue, wanders and loses itself. He that lives every-where, lives no-where.

*Of*

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*Of a LYRE.*

**I**N plain Truth, Lying is a hateful and accursed Vice; for we are not Men, nor have any Society with one another but by Speech. If falsehood, like Truth, had but one Face only, we should be upon better terms, for we should then take the contrary to what the Lyar says for certain Truth: But there are a thousand ways to miss the White, and but one only to hit it.

False-speaking is much less sociable than Silence.

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*Of divers kinds of Eloquence.*

There are two sorts of Eloquence; the one prompt and sudden, which makes a Man speak easily and well off-hand; the other more slow and deliberate, which requires much leisure for premeditation: The first is more suitable to Advocates; and the second to Preachers. It seems to be the peculiar Nature of Wit, that its Operation is quick and sudden, and of Judgment, that it is slow and sedate. It is a wild Curiosity of human Wit, to amuse it self with grasping at things Future, as if it had not enough to do to digest the Present.

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*Of the freedom of a private Life.*

**I** Retrench, as much as I can, the Ceremonies of Address in my own Family ; if any Man is offended with me for it, I cannot help it ; for I think it better to offend him for once, than to be always uneasy to my self, which would be a perpetual slavery : And why do we shun the servile Attendance of Courts, if we bring the same trouble into our own private Houses ?

The Laws of Civility are sometimes burdensome ; and provided some of them be omitted out of Discretion, and not for want of Breeding, it will be every whit as handsome. I have seen some People Rude by being over-civil, and troublesome with their nice puncto's of Curtesie.

*Of a discreet and well-temper'd  
Valour.*

WE must, above all things, take heed of falling into the Hands of a Judge, who is an Enemy and Victorious. Valour has its bounds as well as other Vertues; for a Man might reasonably despise two Culverines, who would be a Madman to abide a Battery of 30 Pieces of Canon.

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*Of Evil Affectation.*

EVERY one chuses to Prate of another's Province rather than his own, as thinking it so much new Reputation gain'd; witness the Jeer which was put upon *Periander*, That he had quitted the Glory of an excellent Physician,

sician, to gain the Repute of a bad Poet. *Cæsar* in his *Commentaries* affects to describe his Invention of building Bridges, and contriving Warlike Engines: He was justly celebrated for an excellent Captain; but he would be esteem'd also a good Engineer, tho this was an Art something foreign to his high Office.

In the reading of Histories, I am wont to consider what kind of Men are the Writers of them. If they be only Learned Men, of no particular Profession, I observe chiefly the Stile and Language: If they be Physicians, I do more readily believe what they say of the Temper of the Air, the Complexion of Princes, of Wounds and Diseases; if Lawyers and Divines, we learn from them the Establish'd Laws for Civil Government and the Affairs of the Church; if they be Courtiers and Embassadors, I consider chiefly in them what concerns the Intrigues of the Court,

Court, Treaties of Peace, and all sorts of Negotiations; if they be Soldiers, I expect from them an Account of Military Expeditions, and principally of those wherein they were personally engag'd.

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### Of FEAR.

**F**EAR is a marvellous strong Passion, and has done strange feats in the World; how often has it converted Flocks of Sheep into Armed Squadrons! Reeds and Bulrushes, into Swords and Lances! How often has it chang'd our Friends into our Enemies, and the *French* White into the Red Cross of *Spain*! nay, it has so far transported Men, as to make them afraid of their own Succours, and mistake their own Auxiliary Troops for the Troops of their Enemies; *Adeo pavor etiam auxilia formidat.* But its strongest effort is in its greatest

greatest Extremity ; when it inspires Men with a desperate Courage, after it had altogether dispirited the same Persons.

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*Of DEATH.*

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**T**H E end of our Race is Death ; and if that fright us, how is it possible to advance one step without trouble and a fit of an Ague ? The *Romans* were wounded to the Heart with the bare sound of this Syllable, *Death*, which did so harshly grate their Ears, that they found out a way to soften and lessen the horror by a *Periphrasis* ; and therefore instead of saying bluntly, *Such a one is dead*, they minc'd the matter thus, *Such a one has ceas'd to live* ; or, *Such a one has liv'd* ; for provided there was any mention of Life in the case, tho' it was past, yet it carry'd some sound of

Con-

Consolation. And from them we have borrow'd our Expression in French, of *The late Monsieur such and such a one.*

If Death were an Enemy that could be avoided, I would advise to borrow Arms even of Cowardise it self for our own defence; but since nothing can save us from it, let us learn to stand our ground stoutly, and Fight it with all our Force.

We must be always Booted and Spur'd, and ready to begin our Journey into the other World; and for that end we must, above all things, take care, that when we come to Dye, we have no Business with any but our self; for there we shall find Work enough, without any need of Addition. The quietest Deaths are the happiest.

We must design nothing that will require a long time to finish, or, at least, with no passionate desire to see it brought to perfection. We are born for Action; I would always

always have a Man to be doing, and, as much as in him lies, to extend the Offices of Life even to the smallest Concerns. Let Death find me Planting my Cabbages, but without any anxious thoughts about him, and much less of leaving my Gardens unfinish'd.

Things do often appear to us greater at a distance than near at hand. I have found, by experience, that when I was in Health, I had a much greater horror of Diseases, than when I was afflicted with them.

Nature deprives us of all Sight and Sense of our bodily decays ; should a Man fall into them all of a sudden, human Nature would not be capable of enduring such a Change : But Nature leading us, as it were, by the Hand, carries us on insensibly, step by step, to that miserable Condition, and reconciles us to it, I know not how.

We are not sensible of the stroke when our Youth dies in us, tho  
it

it be really a harder Death than that of Old Age, which is the total Dissolution of an infirm and languishing Body ; for the Jump is not so great from a miserable Life to none at all, as from a pleasant and flourishing state of Life, to one that's full of Trouble and Pain.

What remains to an old Man of the vigor of his Youth and better Days ? When an old Weather-beaten Soldier came to *Cæsar*, and ask'd him leave to Kill himself, he taking notice of his wither'd Body, worn out with hard Labour, and stooping under the load of Years, answer'd him pleasantly, *Thou fanciest then that thou art yet Alive.*

Go out of this World ( says Nature) as you enter'd into it ; the same Pass you made from Death to Life, without Passion or Fear, make now again after the same manner from Life to Death : Your Death is a part of the Order

der of the Universe, and of the Life of the World. The day of your Birth was one day's advance towards Dying, as well as Living.

If you have liv'd one Day, you have seen all; one Day is equal and like to all other Days; for there is no other Light, nor any other Night. Come the worst to the worst, the variety of all the Acts of my Comedy is perform'd in a Year; the four Seasons of the Year represent the Infancy, Youth, Virility, and Old Age of the World.

Give place to others, as others have done to you. Tho you live long, you shall abate nothing of the time you are to continue in the Grave. No Man dies before his Hour. The Time you leave behind you was no more yours, than that which was past and gone before your Birth, neither does it any more concern you. The advantage of Living does not consist

in

in length of Days, but in the right improvement of our Time. He that husbands his Time well, Lives a long while, tho his Life is but short ; for it depends upon our Will, and not upon the number of Days, to have a sufficient length of Life.

Is it possible to imagine, that you shall never arrive at the place, towards which you are continually going ? and yet there is no Road but has its end : But it Company will make your Journey more pleasant, Does not all the World go the same way ? All things grow Old proportionably as you do ; a Thousand Men, and a Thousand Animals Dye in the same instant that you Expire.

Tho thy Age may not be accomplish'd, yet thy Life is. A little Man is as much a Man as a Giant ; neither Men nor their Lives are measur'd by the Ell.

The last step is not the cause of Weariness, but confesses it ; every

ry day travels towards Death, the last only arrives at it. When we look upon the grim Visage of Death in the Field of War, whether with respect to our own particular Danger, or that of others, it appears without compare less Frightful than at Home in our own Houses ; which makes me think, that the terrible Ceremonies and mournful Preparations wherewith we set it out at Home, do more fright us than the thing it self. The Cries of Women and Children, the Visits of Trembling and astonish'd Friends, the attendance of pale and blubber'd Servants, a dark Chamber set round with burning Tapers, our Beds encompass'd with Physicians and Divines : In fine, all these terrible and frightful Ceremonies make a Man almost fancy, that he is Dead and Bury'd already.

Children are afraid even of those they love best, when they see them disguis'd in a Vizor ; just so it fares with

Of Sieur Montaigne's *Essays.* 25  
with us; and therefore the Vizor  
must be removed from Things as  
well as Persons.

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*The Profit of one Man is the loss  
of another.*

THE Merchant does not thrive  
or grow rich, but by the  
Pride and Debauchery of Youth;  
nor the Husband-man, but by the  
Dear h of Corn; nor the Architect,  
but by the ruin of Houses; nor  
the Lawyers and Officers of Justice,  
but by the Suits and Contentions  
of Men. A Physician takes no  
pleasure in the Health even of his  
Friends, says the ancient Greek  
Comedian: And which is yet  
worse, let any one search his own  
Breast, and he will find that our  
secret Wishes spring and grow up  
at another's Expence.

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*Of C U S T O M.*

THE Wit of Man is not capable of any Fancy so Wild and Extravagant, which does not meet with some Example of publick Practice, and consequently is, in some measure, justified and supported by our Reason. Human Reason is a Tincture, infus'd, in a proportion almost equal, into all our Opinions and Customs of what form soever they be.

*Pindar* calls Custom, the Queen and Empress of the World. There is nothing, in my Opinion, which she does not, or cannot do. When one was seen beating of his Father, and reprov'd for so doing, he made Answer, That it was the Custom of his Family, That in like manner his Father had beaten his Grandfather, and his Grandfather had beaten his Great Grandfather; and

and pointing to his Son he said, He will also beat me when he comes to my Age. 'Tis as much from Custom as indisposition of Body, says *Aristotle*, that Women tear their Hair, bite their Nails, eat Coles, Chalk, and such-like Trash.

The principal Effect of the Power of Custom is this, That it seizes us as its Property, and exercises such an absolute Dominion over us, that 'tis very difficult to rescue our selves from its Tyranny, and so far to come to our selves, as to reason and consider of the things which it enjoys us: Because we Suck in with our Mother's Milk the use of all received Customs, and the Face of the World presents it self at first to our view under these Forms, we are apt to think, that the Condition of our Nature obliges us to follow them; and that the fancies which we find every-where in repute about us, are natural and u-

niversal; and hence we conclude, That what is not agreeable to Custom, is contrary to Reason; but how unreasonably for the most part, God knows

We commonly look upon the Advices and Precepts of Truth, as directed only to the common sort of People, and not at all to our selves; therefore instead of governing our selves by them, we only stuff our Memories with them, as if they were altogether useless for directing our Practice.

Such People as have been bred up to Liberty, and have govern'd themselves only by their own Authority, look upon all other forms of Government as monstrous and contrary to Nature: And those who are born under a Monarchy, have the same Opinion of Common-Wealths; Such is the power of Custom.

There are some Laws which are inconsistent and destroy one another; such are those of Honour

nour and those of Justice, which in many cases impose upon us things contrary: For the former as rigorously condemn a *Lye taken*, as the latter do the Revenge taken for *giving the Lye*. By the *Law of Arms* he is degraded from all Honour and Nobility, who puts up an affront, and by the *Civil Law* he that takes Vengeance for it, incurs a Capital Punishment. He that seeks Redress by Law for an Affront, disgraces himself; and he that does not seek Redress this way, is Punished by the Laws.

All singular Fashions proceed rather from Folly and vain Affection, than from true Reason.

A wise Man ought to retire within himself, and to withdraw from the Crowd, that he may be in a condition to judge freely of things; but as to his outward Garb, he ought entirely to follow the received Fashions and Customs of the Time. Publick Society has nothing to do with our Thoughts,

but all besides them, as our Actions, our Labours, our Fortunes, and our Lives, we are to abandon to its Service, and resign up to the common Opinion ; as did that great and good Man *Socrates*, who refus'd to save his Life by Disobedience to the Magistrate, tho he was very unjust ; for it is the Rule of Rules, and Law of Laws, that every one observe those of the place wherein he lives.

The Benefit and Advantage perhaps is not so great which will accrue from the alteration of a Law received, whatsoever it be, as the mischief which will arise from changing it ; for Government is like a Structure made up of several parts so closely joyn'd together, that you cannot remove one part without endangering the whole.

For my own part, I have always had a great Aversion to Novelty, upon whatsoever pretence it is carried

carried on. Those who give the first shock to a State, are commonly the first that are Buried in its Ruines. The advantages of publick Commotions are seldom enjoy'd by the first mover; he does only trouble the Waters for the benefit of other Fisher-men. The best pretence for Innovation is of very dangerous Consequence.

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### *Of RELIGION.*

**T**H E Christian Religion has all the Marks of Truth and Righteousness; but none is more apparent than its severe Injunction to yield Obedience to Magistrates, and to observe the Laws.

In matters of Religion, we must adhere to those who are establish'd Judges of Doctrine, and are invested with lawful Authority, and not to those who are the most learned and able Men.

*Of the Empire of Fortune.*

**H**umane Prudence is a very vain and frivolous Thing ; for in spite of all our Projects, Counsels and Precautions, Fortune will still reserve to herself the sovereign disposal of Events.

It sometimes happens, that such strokes slip from the hand of a Painter, as far surpass all his Ideas and Skill, and transport himself to admiration and astonishment. A judicious Reader does often discover in other Mens Writings such Beauties and Graces, as the Author himself did never perceive.

All that our Wisdom can do, is no great matter : The surest way, in my Opinion, is to take the side which has most Honesty and Justice ; and when we are doubtful which is the shortest way, to hold always

*in Sieur Montaigne's Essays.* 33  
always to that which is most  
streight.

An over-wary and circumspect  
Prudence, is a mortal Enemy to  
all great and noble Exploits.

If we would oblige our Enemies  
to trust to us, we must, at least in  
appearance, put a Confidence in  
them. By this Artifice, the most  
distrustful of our Kings settled the  
Commotions of his Kingdom.

*Cæsar* oppos'd only the Au-  
thority of his Countenance, and  
the sharpness of his Rebukes to  
mutinous Legions: He trusted so  
much to himself and his Fortune,  
that he was not afraid to commit  
himself to a Rebellious and Se-  
ditous Army.

To invite a Man's Enemies to  
cut his Throat, is a Counsel a  
little extravagant; and yet a Man  
had better take that Course, than  
live in continual fear of such a  
mischief as admits of no Remedy.

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*Of Pedantry and true Learning.*

**P**lutarch says, That *Grecian* and *Scholar*, were Names of contempt among the *Romans*, just as the Name of *Pedant* is among us. I am apt to think, that as Plants are choak'd with too much moisture, and Lamps with too much Oyl ; so it happens to the Mind of Man, when it is embarrass'd with too much Study and Matter ; for being confounded with a great variety of things, it loses the power of extricating it self, and so is rendered useleſſ.

'Tis no wonder, that neither Scholars nor Masters become more fit for Business, tho they are more learned than other Men ; in plain truth, the Care and Expence our Parents are at, aim at nothing but to furnish our Heads with noti-  
tions, but not a word of Judgment  
and

and Vertue. Cry out to the People of one that passes by, O what a Learned Man goes there! And of another, O what a Good Man is that! And they will certainly look upon the former with Admiration and Reverence, but show no regard to the second; such Blockheads and Coxcombs are they! We commonly enquire, Does such a one understand Greek? or, Is he a Critick in Latine? Is he he a Poet? or does he write only in Prose? But whether he be grown better or wiser, which are the principal Qualifications of a Man, these are never enquir'd after; at least we should rather ask, Who is the better Learned, than who is more Learned? But we labour only to stuff our Memories, but take no care to govern well our Hearts and Lives. We can say, *Cicero* says thus; this is the Opinion of *Plato*; and these are the very words of *Aristotle*: But what do we say our selves that's

our

36 *The most Excellent Thoughts*  
our own? What do we do? What  
do we judge? A Parrot might say  
as much as we do.

We are like to him who wanting Fire, went to a Neighbour's House to fetch it, and finding a very good one there, he sat down by it to warm himself, and forgot to carry any home with him. If I have a mind to arm my self against the fear of Death, it must be at the Expence of *Seneca*. If I search for grounds of Consolation for my self, or another, I borrow them of *Cicero*; whereas we might have found them in our selves, if we had exercis'd and improv'd our own Reafon. I hate this relative and beggarly Sufficiency which depends altogether upon others; for tho a Man could become learned by another's Learning; yet I am sure he can never be wise, but by his own Wisdom.

Do but observe a Scholar when he comes back from School, after he has been there for many Years, there s;

there's nothing so aukward and unfit for Company or Busines: You will find that all he has got there, amounts to no more than this, That his Latin and Greek have made him a greater and more conceited Coxcomb than when he went from home: He should have furnish'd his Mind with real and useful Knowledge; but he has, swell'd it with vain and empty Shreds. For my part, I had rather he had spent his Time at Tennis; for by that Exercise, his Body, at least, would have been kept more Healthy and Vigorous.

These *Pedants* do no wise better, or improve the Boys, entrusted with them, as a Carpenter or Mason would do, but make them much worse, and then make their Parents pay for having made them so. The Husband-man and Cobbler go simply and honestly about their Busines, and talk about such things as they understand; but our pretending *Pedants*, to raise them-

themselves a great Name among the common People, are perpetually talking Gibberish to them, and very often entangle themselves in their own Nonsense : They are very well acquainted with *Galen*, but not at all with the Disease of the Patient : They weary you with a long ribble-row of Laws, but know nothing of the Cause in hand ; they have learn'd the Theories of all things, let who will put them in Practice for them. This sort of People neither understand themselves nor others, their Memories are full enough, but their Judgment is wholly void and empty.

*Adriannus Turnebus* had nothing of the Pedant but the wearing of his Gown, and some external Fashions ; but within he was the most Polite Soul in the World. I hate such People as can worse endure a Pedantick Garb, than an ill-contriv'd Mind ; and take their Measures of a Man, by the Leg.

Leg he makes, by his Behaviour,  
and by the Fashion of his Boots.

'Tis no part of the Office of Knowledge to make a Blind Man see ; Her Business is not to find a Man Eyes, but to improve the sight of those that have them, and to furnish the Soul with such Principles as may conduct a Man safe in all his Affairs : But when the Soul is stark-blind in it self, Knowledge can be of no use to direct it.

Nature can do all, and does all. As Cripples are very unfit for Bodily Exercise, so are lame Souls for the Researches of the Mind.

Among the *Perſians*, when the King's eldest Son arriv'd at fourteen Years of Age, his Education was entrusted with four Tutors, whereof one was the Wiſeſt, another the moſt Juſt, a third the moſt Moderate, and a fourth the moſt Valiant in the Nation. The firſt inſtructed him in Religion ; the ſecond taught him to be always Sincere, the

the third, to command his Passion, and the fourth, to be afraid of nothing. *Agesilauſ* being ask'd what he thought most proper for Boys to learn ; what they ought to do when they come to be Men, said he. In other Cities of Greece, they us'd to enquire out Rhetoricians, Musick-Masters and Painters ; but in *Lacedaemon*, where Boys were Educated according to the Advice of *Agesilauſ*, they sought out Magistrates, Legislators, and Generals of Armies : At *Athens* they learnt to speak well, but here to do well ; there, how to get rid of a Sophistical Argument, here how to resist the Allurement of Pleasure, how to endure Misfortunes and Death with an undaunted Courage. When *Agesilauſ* Courted *Xenophon* to send his Children to *Sparta* for Education, it is not, said he, to learn there Logick or Rhetorick, but to be Instructed in the nobleſt of all Sciences, *viz.* That which teaches

*in Sieur Montaigne's Essays.* 41  
teaches how to Obey and how to  
Command.

The Study of Sciences does rather soften and enervate the Courage of Men, than any ways confirm them in that Temper. The most Potent Empire which appears at this day in the World, is that of the *Turks*, a People who have as great an Esteem for Arms, as a Contempt of Letters. I find that *Rome* was more Valiant before she grew Learn'd, and the most Warlike Nations, at this time, are the most Rude and Ignorant. When the *Goths* ravag'd *Greece*, the only thing that preserv'd all the Libraries from the Fire, was the Opinion wherewith they were possess'd by one among themselves ; That this Furniture should be left to the Enemies, as being most proper to divert them from military Exercises, and to amuse them with idle Speculations.

He

He that has got a little snatch of every thing, and nothing of the whole, is *a La mode de France*.

A Boy of Quality should rather design by his Studies to become an able Man for Busines, than a Learned Man; and such a Tutor should be chosen for him that is rather a well-fashion'd Man, than one of great Learning.

Truth and Reason are common to every one. Thoughts are no more his who spoke them first, than his who speaks them after: 'Tis no more, according to *Plato*, than according to me, since both he and I do perceive and understand the same thing.

The real Advantages of our Study, are to become wiser and better by it. To know by rote is no Knowledge, and signifies no more, but only to retain what one has entrusted to his Memory. That which a Man rightly understands he may dispose of at his Pleasure, without any regard to the

the Author from whence he had it, or turning over the Leaves of his Book.

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*Of false Judgments.*

**W**hen Wrestlers counterfeit the Philosophers in Patience, 'tis rather strength of Nerves than stoutness of Heart: Yet laborious Exercises do by degrees fortify the Soul; and he that is inur'd to hard Labours, is train'd up to endure Grief. As it is not for any but great Poets to make use of Poetical License; so it is not to be endur'd, that any but great Souls should be privilg'd sometimes from the Authority of Custom.

In conversing with Men, we are so far from gathering Observations from others for our own Improvement, that we labour only to lay our selves open, and are more

more concern'd to vent our own Commodities than to encrease our Stock. Silence therefore and Modesty are very advantageous Qualities in Conversation.

We are so wholly wrapt up within our selves, that we see nothing beyond the length of our Noses. One asking *Socrates*, of what Country he was? He did not make Answer, of *Athens*, but, of the World; his Imagination was of a much larger Extent than ours, for the Universe was his City, and all Mankind his Society. When the Vines of our Village are nipt with the Frost, my Parish-Priest presently concludes, that the Indignation of God is gone out against the whole Race of Mankind, and thinks that the Cannibals have already got the Pip. To him that feels the Hailstones rattling about his Ears, the whole Hemisphere appears to be in Storm and Tempest; like the ridiculous *Savoyard*, who said very gravely,

gravely, That if that simple King of *France* could have manag'd his Fortune wisely, he might have come in time to be Steward of the Household to the Duke his Master: This Fellow could not, in his shallow imagination, conceive, that any thing could be greater than a Duke of *Savoy*.

This great World is the Mirror wherein we are to behold our selves, that we may know our selves to purpose. I would have it to be the Book of my Scholar, which he should Study with the greatest Attention; for so many Opinions, Sects, Laws and Customs, as we find there, will teach us to judge aright of our own, and chiefly to acknowledge the natural Weakness of humane Understanding. So many Subversions of States, and Revolutions of Empires, will make us fear Misfortunes in our own Affairs: So many famous Victories and Conquests being buried in Oblivion, will

will render our hopes ridiculous of eternizing our Names, by taking half a score Light-horse, and a Hen-roost, which is only known by its Ruine.

Our Life, says *Pythagoras*, may be fitly resembled to the Olympick Games, at which some do exercise their Bodies, that they may obtain the Prize, and the Glory of the Victory; and others carry Merchandise to sell, having no other end but Gain. There are some, who seek only to look on, and consider, how, and why every thing is done: All their design is only to be Spectators of other Mens Lives, that they may the better judge of, and regulate their own.

Philosophy is very much despis'd in our Age; 'tis of no use or value among Persons of Honour; of which, I think, these foolish Ergotismes, which have seiz'd the Avenues unto it, are the cause. These People are very much

much to blame, who have represented it with a sad, frowning, pale, and frightful Countenance, which is a very false and unworthy disguise; for there is nothing more Gay, more Gamesom, and, I had almost said, more Wanton. The true sign of Wisdom, is a brisk and constant chearfulness. They are *Baroco*, and *Baralip on*, and not Philosophy, which renders Logicians so Morose and Sower: They who thus reproach her, know her not but by hearsay, for her great End is to make Men Wise, that they may be Happy.

*Demetrius*, the *Grammian*, finding a Knot of Philosophers sitting together in the Temple of *Delphos*, said unto them, *Either I am much deceiv'd, or by your chearful and pleasant Countenances, you are not at all engag'd in Discourse.* To which one of them, *Heracleon* the *Megarian*, reply'd, *That 'tis for such as are puzzled about enquiring whether the future Tense of the*

the Verb *βαλλω*, be spelt with a double *λ*, and from whence the Comparatives *χειρον* and *βελτιον* are deriv'd: Tis for such, says he, to knit their Brows while they are Discoursing about their Art: But as to Philosophical Discourses, they always make Men serene and chearful, not sower and chagrine.

Vertue is no Enemy to Life, Health, Grandeur and Glory; but her proper Office is, to know how to make use of all these good things with moderation; and how to lose them without concern. If Misfortunes happen to a Man she teaches how to bear with them, and makes a good Fortune for him anew.

Let our Pupil be well-furnish'd with Things, Words will follow of course; they will offer themselves and croud in, as one may say, for Employment. There are some so ridiculous, who go a quarter of a mile out of the way, to hunt after a fine Word, whereas Words

Words are to serve and follow a Man's purpose, and let *Gascoyn* come in play, where *French* will not do. I would have things so strike the Imagination of him that hears them, that he may not be at leisure to attend unto Words. For my part, I have a Language that's plain and unaffected, which will appear the same in Writing as it did in Speaking; a manner of speaking that's Significant and Nervose, short and close, which is rather Strong, Lively and Brisk, than Delicate and Polite; but above all, which is free from Affection, and savours neither of the Pedant nor the Monk, but is rather a Soldier-like Stile, as *Suetonius* calls that of *Julius Cæsar*. I do not love a Web, where the Knots and Seams are to be seen, no more than a delicate fine Body, where a Man may tell all the Bones and Veins.

Most of those I converse with, speak the same Language I here write; but whether they have the same Thoughts with me I cannot say: The Substance and Sinews they cannot borrow; but the Cover and Garnish they may.

'Tis a very great Presumption to condemn all things for false, which appear to us improbable; and 'tis a great folly, to believe all things, which happen contrary to the ordinary Course of Nature, to be impossible. This is to measure the infinite Power of God by our own Idea's.

Vain-Glory and Curiosity are the two Scourges of the Soul; of which the latter prompts us to Thrust our Noses into every thing, and the former forbids us to leave any thing undecided.

*Of Society and Friendship.*

**M**arriage is a Market into which every one has a free Entrance ; but the continuance in it is commonly forc'd and constrain'd.

In perfect Friendship, the Souls are so mingled together, and wrought into one Piece, that there remains no more sign of the Seam by which they were first tack'd to one another.

Love is a Feaver Subject to Paroxismes and Intermissions, being a Passion that is Eager, Vehement and Inconstant, but Friendship is a soft, temperate, equal and constant Heat.

If any one here urge me to declare, wherefore I lov'd him, I cannot better express my Senfe than by saying, Because it was He, and because it was

Montaigne  
speaks here  
of Stephen  
of Boetie his  
intimate  
Friend.

I. We sought one another before we met together, and by some secret Sympathy, we embrac'd one another upon the mention of our Names; and at our first meeting, we found our selves so taken with one another, so mutually endeared, so made for one another, that from thenceforward nothing was so near to us as one another.

Love him, said *Chilo*, one of the seven Sages of *Greece*, as if you were one day to hate him; and hate him so, as being one day to Love him. This Precept, however abominable in a perfect and heroical Friendship, is nevertheless very useful and expedient in the common Friendships of the World, to which the words of *Aristotle* may very well be applied, *O my Friends, there is no Friend.*

By reason of the strait Union of two true Friends, they are, according to the same Philosopher, but one Soul in two Bodies, they neither lend nor give any thing to one

one another, because all things are common between them. The mutual Cares, good Offices and Benefits in their Correspondence, are not thought so much worth as to be plac'd to Account ; their Intimate Union deprives them of the Sense of any Value for these Duties, and makes them hate even the words which denote any Division or Difference, such as Benefit, Obligation Entreaty, Acknowledgment, Thanks, and the like. Such a Friendship is a thing so rare and remote from common Practice, that I despair of finding any one qualified to be a fit Judge of it: For even these Discourses left us by Antiquity upon this Subject, appear to me flat and low in comparison of the sense I have of it ; and in this particular, the Effects surpass the very Precepts of Philosophy.

The ancient *Menander* declar'd him to be a happy Man, who had

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the good Fortune to meet with  
but the shadow of a Friend.

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### *Of MODERATION.*

**T**Hose who say there is no excess in Virtue, because when there is excess it is no more Virtue, do only play with words; for a Wise-man is call'd a Fool, and a just man unjust, if he follows Virtue further than is needful. The Archer that shoots over, misses as well as he that falls short.

Marriage is a solemn and religious Tye, and therefore the pleasure we enjoy by it, should be moderate, serious, and even a little severe. It should be a kind of discreet and conscientious Pleasure, and all Brutal Excesses are by any means to be avoided.

A Simple plain Man is most likely to give a true Testimony. Your fine well-bred Gentlemen are indeed

deed more curious in their obser-  
vation, but then they gloss upon  
it; and to add weight to their Inter-  
pretation, and perswade others  
to believe it, they cannot forbear  
to alter the Story a-little; they  
never represent things simply as  
they are, but dress them up, and  
disguise them with such a Face as  
they appear'd in to them; and to  
gain credit to their own Judgment,  
they are willing to help out  
the Story, and enlarge it with  
something of their own Invention.  
He must be a Person of great Sin-  
cerity, who espouses no other In-  
terest but that of Truth; and of  
great Simplicity, who neither can  
invent any new Matter, nor give  
a colour of Truth to his own In-  
ventions.

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*Of CANNIBALS.*

There is nothing Barbarous and Savage in this Nation that I know of, except that every one gives the title of Barbarity to any thing that is not in use in his own Country ; as, indeed, we have no other Idea of Truth and Reason, but what we derive from the Customs and Examples of the Country wherein we live: There is always the true Religion, the most perfect form of Government, and the most exact and decent use of all things.

The Cannibals are Savages, at the same rate that we say the Fruits are wild, which Nature produces of herself ; whereas, in truth, we ought rather to call those wild, whose Natures we have chang'd by our Art, and diverted from the common order. The natural Virtues

tues and Properties of the former are more active and vigorous, but these of the latter are duller and weaker; for instead of improving, we have corrupted those wild Plants, by forcing them to the pleasure of our own Palate; and, indeed, it is not reasonable that Art should, by any means, gain a pre-eminence above Nature. We have so overloaded the Beauty and Riches of her Works, by our Inventions, that we have in a manner quite stifled and choak'd her. Wheresoever Nature shines in her own Native Purity, she shames and disgraces all our vain Attempts. Our utmost endeavours cannot arrive at so much Art, as to imitate the Nest of a Bird, or the Web of a Spider. All things, says *Plato*, are produc'd either by Nature, or by Fortune, or by Art, the greatest and most beautiful by one or other of the two former; the least and most imperfect by the last.

In this sense therefore these Nations seem to be Barbarous, which have receiv'd but little of any new Form or Fashion from human Art, and are still but one remove from their Original Simplicity. The Laws of Nature govern them still, which are very little vitiated with any mixture of ours. What we find by experience in these People, does not only surpass all the Images which the Poets could give of their Golden Age, but also the Idea's and Wishes of Philosophy. Should I tell *Plato*, that 'tis a Nation wherein there is no kind of Traffick, no knowledge of Letters, no skill of Numbers, no name of Magistrate or publick Superiority, no Contracts, no Dividends, and where not so much as the very words which signify Lying, Treachery, Dissimulation, Covetousness, Envy, Detraction and Pardon, were ever heard of; how much would he find his Imaginary Republick fall

fall short of this Natural Perfection! Their old Men whom they hearken to as their Masters, recommend only two things to them, Valour in Fighting against their Enemies, and Love towards their Wives. They believe that the Souls of Men are Eternal, and that those who have deserved well of the Gods, are lodg'd in that part of Heaven where the Sun rises.

Their Wars are altogether Noble and Generous, having no other Foundation than the Jealousie of Virtue. They do not Fight for acquiring the Dominions of their Enemies, but only for Victory. With them all things that are not necessary are superfluous. Their Combates never end without Effusion of Blood; for they know not what Flight means. Every one carries back, as his Trophy, the Head of his Enemy whom he has Kill'd, and fixes it over the Door of his House. They demand no other Ransom of their Prisoners,

Prifoners, but to acknowledge they are Overcome ; but there is not one found in a whole Age, who will not rather choose to dye than make ſuch a Confefſion. There is not a Man among them who had not rather be Kill d and Eaten, than ſpeak a word, or make the leaſt ſign, to intreat that he may not. They leave them at liberty, that they may have an opportunity to make their Escape : They threaten them with the cruel Death they are to ſuffer, to ter- rifie them, and extort from them ſome ſubmiſſive words or ſigns of Weakneſſ ; and, indeed, if the matter be rightly conſider d, 'tis in this point only that a true Vi- ctory conſists.

True Courage does not lie in the firmneſſ of our Legs and Arms, but of our Head and Heart ; it does not conſift in the Bravery of our Horſe and Armor, but in our Valour. I have a Song made by one of these Prisoners which has nothing

nothing Savage in it, but is full of I know not what Heroical Vigor: Take it as follows. "Let them come all boldly and meet together to Eat me, for they shall at the same time Eat their Fathers and Grandfathers, whose Flesh has serv'd to feed and nourish my Body. These Muscles, these Veins, and these Members, are your own; poor Fools as you are, you little think that the Substance of your Ancestors is still here: Mind it well as you eat my Body, and you'll find in it the Taste of your own Flesh." Those who paint one of these Prisoners Dying, represent him with a fierce and undaunted Countenance, braving his Enemies while they are killing him, spitting in their Face, and making a wry Mouth at them, even to the very last Gasp.

The Cannibals have Love-Songs, as well as those that are Warlike; here follows the beginning of one of

of them: "Stay Adder, stay, stay  
" Adder, that by the Pattern of  
" thy Painted Skin my Sister may  
" draw the Form and Fashion of a  
" Rich Wreath, which I am to  
" present to my Beloved." They  
call in their Language Men,  
the half of one another. All the  
advantage of a Military Comman-  
der is this, That he marches be-  
fore the rest to Battle.

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*That a Man is to judge Soberly of  
Divine Matters.*

**T**Hings unknown are the true  
and natural Subject of Im-  
posture; for besides that the very  
strangeness gains them Credit,  
which exempts them from the  
Laws of ordinary Discourses, we  
have no way left of Disputing a-  
gainst them; for which reason  
*Plato* said, that it was more easie  
to satisfie the Hearers with Dis-  
courses.

courses about the nature of the Gods than of Men.

Nothing is so firmly believ'd, as that which we least know, nor are any People so Dogmatical, as those who entertain us with fabul-  
lous Stories; such as your Alchy-  
mists, Judicial Astronomers, For-  
tune Tellers, and Quacks, to  
whom I would willingly joyn a  
sort of People, who take upon  
them to Interpret and Control the  
Designs of God himself, and make  
account to find out the cause of  
every Accident, and to discover,  
in the secrets of God's Will,  
the incomprehensible Motives of  
his Works. 'Tis enough for a  
Christian to believe that all things  
come from God, and to take them  
in good part; but to support our  
Religion by the Prosperity of our  
Enterprizes, is what I do not ap-  
prove of. Our Faith is well-groun-  
ded upon other sufficient Proofs,  
without seeking to Authorize it  
by Events: And if the People  
be

be once accustom'd to such plausible Arguments, which are agreeable to their Palate, 'tis to be fear'd, lest they should be staggered in the Faith, when they meet with cross Events, and bad Success.

'Tis very difficult to weigh Divine things in our Ballance, but they will suffer waste and lose of the Weight.

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### *Of SOLITUDE.*

**L**E<sup>T</sup> us say to Ambition, that 'tis she herself, that makes us relish Solitude, for what does she more avoid than Society? What does she so much seek as Elbow-room?

There is great danger of Infection in a Croud, for either we must imitate the Vicious, or hate them. There is nothing more Unsociable, nor more Sociable, than Man; the one by his Vice, the

the other by his Nature. We often think we have wholly taken leave of all Business, when we have only chang'd one Employment for another.

The Soul is wholly intent upon that Business which employs its Thoughts. Domestick Employments are not less troublesome for being less Important. When we have shak'd hands with the Court, we have not taken leave of the Vanity, Avarice, and other Passions of Life; these still follow us to every place, even to Cloisters and Philosophical Schools; neither Deserts, nor Rocks, Hairshirts, nor Fasts, can disengage us from them. 'Tis not enough to change our way of Living, and our Opinions, or to retire from the publick; we must depart from the Maxims and Customs of the World; we must sequester and remove our selves from our selves, otherwise we still carry our Fetters along with us,

us, and do not leave them behind us; and then we can never attain to perfect Liberty; for we will still be casting a kind look upon what we have left behind, and find our Fancy full of it: Our Disease is lodg'd in our Soul, which cannot escape from it self, and therefore it is to be call'd home, and confin'd within it-self. This is true Solitude, which may be enjoy'd in populous Cities, and the Courts of Kings, tho more commodiously apart from them.

If we have a mind to lead a Solitary Life, we should so order the matter, that our Contentment may depend wholly upon our selves; we must settle a safe Retreat into our selves, where we may Talk and Laugh freely, without Wife, Children, Goods, Train, or Attendance of Servants, that so when we come to lose any, or all of these, it may be no new thing to us, to be without them.

We

We have a Mind that can reflect upon it self, and be good Company to it self ; it has where-withal to attack and defend, to receive and to give.

Reputation and Glory , to which we freely Sacrifice our Health, Repose, nay, and Life it self, is the most useles and false Coin that passes currant among us.

We have liv'd long enough for others, said one of the Ancients, let us now spend the small Remnant of Life for our selves.

If our own Death does not sufficiently fright us, let us moreover make account of the Death of our Wives, Children and Kindred. If our own Affairs do not give us trouble enough, let us take upon our selves the Concerns of our Neighbours and Friends to encrease our Torment.

'Tis the greatest thing in the World for one to know that he is his own Man : We may love this, and

and that, but espouse nothing but our selves ; that's to say, let the remainder be our own, but not so joyn'd and glu'd to us, but we can part with it, without tearing our selves and rending away some part of us with it.

'Tis high time to wean our selves from Society, when we are grown altogether unfit for it. He that is not in a condition to lend, must not be allow'd to borrow : Our Forces fail us, let us take our Rest ; we are now become Useless, Burdensome, and Importunate to others, let us take heed that we do not grow so to our selves. We must sooth and caress our selves as one may say ; but then, at the same time, we must so govern our selves, so reverence and stand in awe of our Reason and Conscience, as to be ashamed to make a false step in their Presence.

*Socrates* says, That Boys are to seek for Masters to instruct them ; Men are to exercise themselves in well-

well-doing, and Old Men are to retire from all Civil and Military Employments, that they may live only to themselves.

The greatest part of Pleasures wheedle and careſſ us for no other end, but that they may ſtrangle us. If the Head-ach ſhould come before Drunkenneſſ, we ſhould then take heed of Drinking too much; but Pleaſure, on purpoſe to deceiver us, marches before and conceals her Train. At Study, at Hunting, and all other Exercises, we ought to go ſo far as the utmoſt bounds of Pleaſure, and leave off where Pain begins to mingle with it.

Ambition is, of all other, the Humor moſt opposite to Solitude; Vain-glory and Repoſe are perfectly inconsistent.

Quit, with other Pleaſures, that which proceeds from the Approbation of others, and as to your own Knowledge and Parts, never trouble your ſelf about them, they will

will not lose their effect if your self be ever the better for them. Remember him who being ask'd, why he took so much pains in an Art that could come to the knowledge of but few Persons? A few are enough for me, replied he, I have enough of one, I have enough of never a one. He said true, you and a Companion are Theatre enough to one another, or you to your self; let all the People be to you as one Person, and one Person be to you instead of all the People.

'Tis an unworthy Ambition to think to derive Glory from a Man's Sloth and Privacy. You are to be like the Beasts of Chace, who deface the Tract at the Entrance into their Dens. You are no more to concern your self how the World talks of you, but how you are to talk to your self. Retire your self into your self, but first prepare your self there to receive your self. It were Folly to trust

trust your self to your self, if you know not how to govern your self. Until you have render'd your self such in Solitude, that you dare not trip in your own presence ; until you have acquir'd a reverence for your self ; Present continually to your Imagination, *Cato*, *Phocio*, and *Aristides*, before whom, even Fools themselves would hide their Faults : They will keep you to your Duty, and teach you to confine your self within due bounds, to borrow nothing of any other, and to be content with your self.

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*Of PRAISES.*

IF the brave Exploits of *Xenophon* and *Cæsar* had not far transcended their Eloquence, I do not believe they would ever have taken the pains to have written them. 'Tis a kind of Mockery and Reproach to extol a Man for these Qualities which are unsuitable to his Rank and Dignity, tho they be otherwise commendable in themselves, but such as ought not to be his chief Accomplishments; as if a Man should commend a King for being a good Architect, a good Musician, a good Marksman, or a good Runner at the Ring; these Commendations add no Honour to him, unless they come in the train of those which are peculiar to his high Office.

When

When the Companions of *Demosthenes*, in their Embassy to *Philip*, extoll'd that Prince as Handsom, Eloquent, and a stout Drinker, *Demosthenes* reply'd, That these were Commendations more proper for a Woman, an Advocate, and a Spunge, than for a King.

Every Opinion is of force enough to make itself be espous'd at the expence of Life. The first Article of the Oath which *Greece* took and observ'd in the *Median* War, was, That every one should rather exchange Life for Death, than their own Laws for those of *Perſia*.

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*On what depends the Sense of Good  
and Evil.*

**T**HAT which puts an edge upon our Pain, is the sharpness of our Conceit. 'Tis pretended, that nothing can displease these Philosophers, who boast, in the acutest Diseases, that they feel nothing: But shall we perswade our Skins, that the jerks of a Whip tickle us? or our Taste, that a Potion of *Aloes* is *Graves-wine*?

A Rich Man who is in uneasy Circumstances, is more miserable than a Poor Man who is barely Poor. The things are not so difficult and painful of themselves; but 'tis our Weakness and Cowardise that makes them so. To judge of great and high Matters, requires a suitable Greatness of Soul.

Of all the Follies in the World, the most universally receiv'd is the folly,

solicitous Care of Reputation, and an unaccountable frivolous Glory, of which Men are so fond, as to Sacrifice Riches, Peace, Health and Life, that are real and substantial Goods, to this vain Phantome: Even those who wrote against Vain-glory, would publish their Books wherein they oppose it with their Names to them, and sought to derive Glory from a seeming contempt of it. When one told the King of *Sparta*, That the Republick must needs be in a flourishing Condition, because he knew so well to Command; he answer'd wisely, That it was rather, because the People knew so well how to Obey.

*Of the Inequality among us.*

**P**lutarch says somewhere, That he does not find so great a difference betwixt Beast and Beast, as he does betwixt Man and Man: I would gladly advance above Plutarch, and say, That there is more difference betwixt such and such a Man, than there is betwixt such a Man and such a Beast.

'Tis very strange that no Estimate is made of any Creature except our selves, but by its proper Qualities. We commend a Horse for his Strength and sureness of Foot, and not for his rich Caparisons; a Greyhound for his share of Heels, and not for his fine Collar; a Hawk for her Wing, and not for her Gests and Bells: Why, in like manner, do we not value a Man for that which is properly his own? He has a stately Palace, a long

a long train of Servants, so many Thousand Pounds a Year, is the common way of estimating Men, tho all these things are about them, not in them. If you cheapen a Horse, you'll see him stript of his Housings-cloaths, and view him naked and uncover'd ; why then do you prize a Man when he is wrapt and muffled up in Cloaths ? 'Tis the price of the Blade that you enquire into, and not of the Scabbard : You are to judge of such a Man by himself, and not by his Apparel. Know you, said one of the Ancients, why you reckon such a one Tall, you measure him by the heighth of his Chepines, whereas the Pedestal is no part of the Statue. Measure him without his Stilts, let him lay aside his Revenues and Offices, and present himself without his Shirt ; and then let him examine, if his Body be well-fram'd for its proper Functions ; what Soul has he ? Is it Beautiful, Great

and Generous? Is she rich of what is her own? Has Fortune no hand in the Affair? Is she Serene and Content? This is what is to be examin'd: And such a Man is rais'd Five hundred Fathoms above Dutches and Kingdoms; he is an absolute Monarch in, and to, himself.

In *Thrace* the King was distinguish'd from his People after a very pleasant and costly manner: He had a Religion by himself, a God entirely his own, and whom his Subjects were not to presume to Adore, which was *Mercury*; whilst on the other side he disdain'd to have any thing to do with their Gods, *Mars*, *Bacchus*, and *Diana*.

The Pomp which accompanies Great Men, and distinguishes them from the Common People, cannot secure them from a Fever nor from Fear: When they are troubled with the Megrim, no rich Caps will restore them to Health:

The

The Canopy Embroider'd with Gold and Pearl, which he lies under, has no vertue to allay a violent fit of the Cholick. At the first twich of the Gout in a Prince, 'tis pretty to be call'd, Sir, and Your Majesty; but does he not forget his Palace and his Grandeur? If he be Angry, can his being a Prince keep him from looking Red, and grinding his Teeth like a Madman? The least prick of a Pin, and the smallest Passion of the Soul, are able to deprive us of the pleasure of an Universal Monarchy.

The Honour we receive from those that Fear us, is not Honour; these Respects are paid to my Royalty, and not to Me: My own height excludes me from familiar Converse with Men; they follow me out of Decency or Custom, or rather they follow my Fortune to encrease their own: All that they talk to me is a forc'd disguise, their Liberty being on all hands

restrain'd by the great Power I have over them. I see nothing about me but a false and counterfeit Appearance : All the real advantages of Princes, are common to them with Men of meaner Fortunes ; they have no other Sleep, nor Appetite than we ; their Crowns do not secure them from the Sun nor Rain.

Tis a great satisfaction to a Man's Mind, to have only one Path to walk in, and to have none to answer for but himself. *Cyrus* was wont to say, That no Man was fit to Rule, but he who was of greater value than all those he was to Govern.

As to the fruition of Pleasure, Kings are in a worse Condition than private Men ; forasmuch as the opportunities and facility they have of commanding all things at will, deprives them of that relish which we find in them. Can we think that the Singing-Boys of the Choir take any great delight

light in their own Musick? No, their continual use does blunt the taste of the Pleasure, and renders it tedious to them: Farces and Tumbling-Tricks are pleasant to the Spectators, but are laborious and painful to those by whom they are perform'd.

We see that Princes divert themselves sometimes by disguising their Quality, by degrading themselves, and stooping to the poor way of Living of the meanest of their People. Every one fears to be pry'd into, and censur'd for their evil Actions; but Princes are narrowly observ'd in every thing, even to their very Looks and Thoughts; for all the People think they have a Right and Title to be Judges of them. I could never fancy that it was any advantage to a Man of Sense, to have Twenty People prating about him when he is at Stool, or that the Services of a Man who has Ten thousand Livres a Year,

and who has taken *Casal*, or defended *Siena*, are more commodious than those of an experienc'd Groom of the Chamber, who loves his Master, and understands his Place.

The Advantages of Great Men, for the most part, are merely Imaginary. Every degree of Fortune has in it some Image of Principality; for real and effectual Subjection only concerns such among us, who voluntarily thrust their Necks into the Yoke, who design to get Honour and Wealth by such Service. He that Loves his own Fire-side, and knows how to govern his Family, without Quarrels or Law-Suits, is as free as a Duke of *Venice*.

One of the great Advantages of Royal Power, is, that the Subjects are bound, not only to submit to their Prince's Actions, but also to praise them. The Emperor *Julian*, being one day applauded for his exact Justice; I should be proud of these praises, said he, did

did they come from Persons that durst blame me, in case I were guilty of Injustice.

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### *Of Sump*t*uary L A W S.*

**L**ET Princes abandon their foolish Expences in their Tables and Cloaths; let them leave off these Ensigns of Grandure, that have others enough besides: Such excesses are more excusable, in a private Man than in a Prince. Let Kings but lead the Dance, and make Sump*t*uary Laws for themselves, and the Business will be done in a Month's Time, without any Law or Edict. If a Law be made, it ought to forbid the wearing of Gold or Silver to all sorts of Persons, but Tumblers and Whores. Our Kings may do what they please in such kind of Reformations; their Inclination and Example will stand in this case for a Law: Whatever is done

done at Court, passes for a Rule through the Rest of *France*. *Plato* esteems nothing of more pernicious Consequence to his Commonwealth, than to give Young Men liberty of introducing any change in their Habits, Dances, and even in their Songs. In all things, saving those that are Evil, a change is to be feared. No Laws are in true Credit, but such as have lasted so long, that no one knows the beginning, or that there ever was any other.

Reason directs, that we should always go the same way, but not always the same pace. Were Virtue it self incarnate, I believe the Pulse would beat faster going on to an Assault, than in going to Dinner.

Of N A M E S.

A Gentleman, a Neighbour of mine, who was always preferring the Excellency of former Ages above the present, did not forget to magnify the lofty and magnificent sound of the Gentlemen's Names of those days, *Don Dru-madan*, *Quadregan*, *Angesilan*. He said, that by the very hearing of their Names, he perceiv'd them to be other-güeſſ Men, than *Pierre*, *Guillot* and *Michel*. I have often wish'd, that such as write Histories in Latin, had left us all the Names, such as they are, for by making *Vandemont* *Valtemontanus*, and metamorphosing Names, to make them suit better with the Greek or Latin, we know not where we are, and lose the Knowledge of the Persons and their Histories.

As to the Arms and Surnames of the Nobility, let us satisfy ourselves with what contented our Fathers, and with what we are: We are great enough, if we rightly understand how to maintain it. Let us pry a little narrowly into the matter, and, in God's Name, examine, upon what Foundation we erect this Glory and Reputation, for which the World is turn'd topsy-turvy, and which costs us so much trouble to purchase. In short, 'tis *Peter* or *William* that carries it, and to whom it only belongs; and this *Peter* or *William*, what is it but a sound when all is done, or three or four dashes with a Pen, so easy to be varied, that I would fain know to whom is to be attributed the Glory of so many Victories, to *Guespin*, *Glesquin*, or to *Guesclin*? And yet there would be much more apparent cause why these Letters of the Alphabet should commence a Suit, than in *Lucian*, that *Sigma* should

should serve *Tau* with a Process; for here the Question is, which of these Letters is to be rewarded for so many Seiges, Battels, Wounds and Imprisonments, and for so great Services done to the Crown of *France* by this famous Constable. How many Persons are there in every Family, and how many more in several Ages and Countries, of the same Name and Surname? History tells us of three of the Name of *Socrates*, five *Plato's*, eight *Aristotles*, seven *Xenophon's*, twenty *Demetrius's*, and twenty *Theodorus's*, not to reckon those she was never acquainted with. Who hinders my Groom from calling himself *Pompey the Great?*

*Of the uncertainty of our Judgment.*

**A**bout all Matters there are probable Arguments on both sides : As for instance, Such as would censure and aggravate the Oversight of our Leaders at *Mont-contour* in not pursuing the Victory, or accuse the King of *Spain* of not knowing how to make use of the Advantage he had against us at *St. Quintin*, may conclude, that these Oversight proceed from a Soul Drunk with Victory, and flush'd with Success, which being full and over-gorg'd with this beginning of good Fortune, had lost all desire of encreasing it, having already enough to do to digest what it had taken in : He had his Arms full, and could Embrace no more, being unworthy of so great an Advantage as Fortune had now put into his hands.

On

On the contrary, it may be argued, That tis the effect of a fiery and unsatiable Spirit, not to know where to set bounds and restrain its Ardor ; that 'tis an abuse of the Favours of Heaven, to exceed the Measures he has prescrib'd them : That 'tis rashness to run the risk of any thing after a Victory obtain'd, and throw themselves again into danger, by exposing themselves to the mercy of Fortune ; in fine, That 'tis a peice of the greatest Wisdom, in the art of War, not to drive an Enemy to Despair. Had not Monsieur *de Foix*'s Ardor transported him to pursue too furiously the remains of the Victory of *Ravenna*, the lustre of it had not been sullied by his Death. 'Tis dangerous to attack a Man you have depriv'd of all means to escape, but by his Arms

Another instance of a Question which may be debated *pro* and *con*, is this, Whether Soldiers should be richly and sumptuously

Ac-

Accoutred, or Arm'd only for necessary Defence. *Sertorius*, *Brutus* and *Cæsar* are of Opinion, That Soldiers should be adorn'd with rich Cloaths, and costly Arms; for, say they, this fine Furniture is a Spur to Glory, and inflames our Courage: It invites them to Fight more obstinately, that they may save the rich Accoutrements which they look upon as their proper Goods and Inheritance; and this is the reason, says *Zenophon*, why those of *Asia* carried their Wives, Concubines, with their choicest Jewels, and all their precious Things along with them to the Wars. But then, on the other side, 'tis argu'd, That a General ought rather to make his Men Careless and Desperate, than encrease the Sollicitude of preserving themselves: That by this means they will be in a double fear of hazarding their Persons, and the Enemy will have a double Temptation to fight with the greater

Re-

Resolution, where not only Victory, but great Booty and rich Spoils are to be obtain'd. And this very thing has been observ'd in former Times, wonderfully to Encourage the *Romans* against the *Samnites*. *Antiochus* shewing *Hannibal* the Army he had rais'd, very Rich and Magnificent in all sorts of Equipage, ask'd him, If the *Romans* would be satisfy'd with that Army? Satisfy'd, reply'd the other, Yes, doubtless, were their Avarice never so great. *Lycurgus* forbad his Soldiers, not only to use any sumptuous Equipage, but also to strip their Conquer'd Enemies; because he would, as he said, That Poverty and Frugality should add Lustre to their Victory.

Why should not I censure *Alexander* Roaring and Drinking to Excess, or Playing at Chess as he us'd to do? I hate and avoid this Game, because it is not Play enough, being too grave and serious

92 *The most Excellent Thoughts*  
ous for a Diversion; and I am a-  
sham'd to bestow as much thought  
and study upon that as would  
serve to much better purposes.

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### *Of the Vanity of Words.*

**T**hose who Paint and Plaister  
up the Ruins of a Woman's  
Face, are much less to blame than  
those who disguise the Truth in  
their Discourses; for the former  
do only deprive us of seeing  
them in their natural Complexi-  
ons; whereas the latter do not  
only deceive our Sight, but cor-  
rupt our Judgment, and adulte-  
rate the very Essence of Things.  
The Republicks that have main-  
tain'd themselves in a regular and  
well-modell'd Government, had  
Orators in no great esteem. *Aristo*  
did wisely define Rhetorick, A  
Science to perswade the People;

*Socrates*

Socrates and *Plato*, An Art to flatter and deceive.

There a sort of little Knacks and frivolous Subtilties, from which Men sometimes seek to derive Reputation; as the Poets who Compose whole Poems after such a manner, that every Line begins with the same Letter. The Nick-name of *Trembling*, which was given to the brave *Sancho*, the 12th King of *Navar*, sufficiently inform us, that Valour will sometimes produce the same Effect as Fear. He was commonly seiz'd with a horror before the Fight, but when one wonder'd at it, he told him, If my Flesh knew into what danger my Courage will presently transport me, it would be much otherwise affected.

There is an Abecedarian Ignorance that precedes Knowledge, and a Doctoral Ignorance that comes after it; an Ignorance that Knowledge it self creates, and begets at the same time that she destroys the first. The

The simple Peasants are good People as well as the Philosophers. There is a natural Poetry which has such Beauties and Graces in it, as equals it to that which is Heroical and Perfect, as appears from our *Gascon* Villanelles and Songs which are brought us from Nations that have no knowledge of Letters.

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### *Of PRAYERS.*

WE Pray only by Custom or by Rote; or, to express my self better, we Read and Pronounce our Prayers a-loud, but the Heart bears no part in them: They are all but Show and Grimace, while we give one Hour to our Vices, and another to God, thinking by this means to make him compensation for them. We seem, in truth, to make use of our *Prayers*

Prayers as a kind of Gibberish, and as those do who employ holy Words about Sorceries and Juggling Tricks.

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## BOOK II.

### *Of the Inconstancy of Human Actions.*

**H**uman Actions do commonly contradict one another in such a strange manner, that it seems impossible they should proceed from the same Person. Pope *Boniface* the 8th, says one, entred into his Papacy like a Fox, behaved himself in it like a Lyon, and died like a Dog. Who could believe that *Nero*, a Monster of Cruelty, having the Sentence of a Condemn'd Man brought to him to Sign, should say, Would to God I had never been taught to Write.

I am

I am more hardly induc'd to believe a Man's Constancy than any other Vertue, and I believe nothing sooner than his Inconstancy. To comprise all the Rules of Life in one word, said one of the Ancients, 'Tis to Will and not to Will always one and the same Thing. What we just now resolv'd upon, we recede from the next minute after, and then return presently to our first Thoughts. We do not go, but are driven, like things that float sometimes leisurely, and sometimes with violence, according to the gentleness or rapidity of the Stream. Our Humours keep Motion with Time. We fluctuate perpetually between various Inclinations. We Will nothing absolutely, nothing constantly. The Man you saw yesterday so courageous and brave you must not think strange to see him a great Coward to day; for either Anger or Necessity, or the Company, or the sound of a Trumpet

Trumpet had rous'd his Spirites, and 'tis no wonder, if by contrary Circumstances, he appears quite another thing. These sudden variations and contradictions which are observ'd in us, have given some occasion to believe, that a Man has two Souls; and others, That he has two Powers that always encline him, the one towards Good, and the other towards Evil, because they think such sudden diversities are not reducible to one and the same Subject. All sorts of Contrarieties are there to be found in their turns, after some manner or other, Bashful and Insolent, Chaste and Lustful, Peevish and Complaisant, a Liar and Sincere, Liberal, Covetous and Prodigal; all this I find in my self more or less, according as I turn my self about. In a word, I can say nothing of my self simply and absolutely, without the mixture and confusion of other things; *Distinguo* is the term

term of most universal use in my Logick. All that we perform, is nothing but a Hotch-potch of several pieces jumbled together, and yet we would acquire Honour by a false Title. Virtue will not be follow'd but upon her own vaccount, and if one sometimes borrows her Mask for some other occasion, she presently pulls it off his Face again.

'Tis not possible for any one who has not design'd his Life in general for some certain End, to range and set in order his particular Actions. Of what use are Colours to him who knows not what he is to Paint? The Archer ought first to know at what he is to aim, and then accommodate his Arm, Bow, String, Arrow, and all their Motions to it. Our Counsels wander from the right way, because they are not levell'd to some determinate End; No Wind will serve him who does not Sail to a certain Port.

No Wise-man will make a Judgment of us by our external Actions only ; he must penetrate into the very Soul, and there discover by what Springs the Motion is guided. We are all mishapen Lumps, made up of several pieces of so various a contexture, that each piece plays every moment its own Game. 'Tis no wonder that Chance has so great Dominion over us, since 'tis by Chance we Live.

There is as great difference betwixt us and our selves at several times, as betwixt us and others. 'Tis a great thing to act the Person of one who is always the same, and consistent with himself.

## Part of an Extent of Of Drunkenness and other Excesses.

Drunkenness seems to me to  
abre a gross and brutish Vice.  
In no other Vices the Soul has the  
greatest Interest; and there are  
some that have I know not what  
appearance of Generosity in them,  
and others wherein there is a mix-  
ture of Knowledge, Diligence, Va-  
lour and Prudence; But this Vice  
of Drunkenness is wholly Corpo-  
real and Sottish: Other Vices dis-  
compose the Understanding, this  
totally overthrows it, and renders  
the Body Stupid. The worst e-  
state of Man is that wherein he  
loses the Knowledge and Gover-  
nment of himself. The Germans  
Drink almost indifferently of all  
sorts of Wines, as if their business  
were to pour down rather than to  
taste. I cannot understand how a  
Man can extend the pleasure of  
Drinking

Drinking beyond Thirst, and create in his Imagination an artificial Appetite, and contrary to Nature.

Wine restores good Humor to young Men, and Youth to old Men. Let a Man be as Wise as he will, he is still but a Man. Wisdom does not offer violence to our natural Dispositions. He must shut his Eye against the blow that threatens him, he must tremble upon the brink of a Precepicce like a Child. Nature has still reserv'd to herself these little Tokens of her Authority to teach Man his Mortality and Folly. He turns Pale with Fear, Red with Shame, and groans with the Cholick, if not with a loud, yet with a broken and low Voice, so as to confess his Frailty.

All Actions which exceed the ordinary bounds are liable to sinister Interpretations, for our Relish of Things is no more adjusted to

what is above, than what is below it.

When *Epicurus* refuses Ease and Health, sets himself to defie the greatest Torments, and despising the lesser Pains, as disdaining to contend with them, he calls out for such as are stronger, sharper, and more worthy of him; these are the Sallies and Efforts of an extravagant Courage. Our Soul of herself cannot reach so high, but she must leave her natural Post, and forcibly transport a Man so far above himself, that he shall afterwards be astonish'd at what he has done. The heat of Battle does frequently so far push on the brave Soldier to perform things of infinite hazard, that when they seriously reflect upon what is past, they are the first that are astonish'd at them. The Poets are often struck with admiration at the sight of their own Writings, and know not how to find again the tract

to so happy a Flight. This in them is call'd Rage and Rapture, and was that which made *Plato* say, That it was in vain for a sober Man to knock at the Door of Poesy.

### Of DEATH.

There are several Accidents in human Life more intolerable than Death it self. The ordinary method of Cures is carried on at the expence of Life. We are tormented with Incisions and Causticks, Food is deny'd us, and at the same time our Blood is taken from us; and if we should go but one step further, that would make a perfect Cure indeed.

There is more Constancy in suffering the Chain we are ty'd to, than breaking it, and greater evidence of Fortitude in a *Regulus* than a *Cato*. 'Tis indiscretion

and impatience that makes us anticipate our Death ; no Accidents can make true Virtue turn her back ; when she seeks Evils and Pains, as the things by which she is maintain'd and supported ; the threats of Tyrants, Tortures and Racks, serve only to animate and rouse her. Death is a Remedy that can never be wanting, and which a Man is never to make use of whilst there is an inch of Hope remaining. All the Inconveniences in the World are not considerable enough, that a Man should Die to evade them. All things are to be hoped by a Man whilst he Lives.

and to the same time out Blood  
taken from us; and if we should  
go out one step further, this would  
make a lasting Curse upon us.

79  
F A say  
metaphor a Cm. The indigent son  
everide of Fortune in a Ryan  
country pleasuring it, any greater  
feeling like China we are likely to

## OF CONSCIENCE.

**S**O great is the power of Conscience, that it makes us betray, accuse, and fight against ourselves ; and, for want of other Witnesses it gives Evidence against us. 'Tis the first Punishment of a Crime, that no Criminal can ever forgive himself. *Hesiod* corrects the saying of *Plato*, *That Punishment follows Sin close at the heels*, it being, as he says, Born at the same time with it. Whosoever expects Punishment already suffers it ; and whosoever has deserv'd it, expects it. *Scipio* being one day Accus'd before the People of Rome of some Crimes of a high nature, instead of excusing himself, or insinuating into the favour of his Judges. *It becomes you very well* (said he) *to sit in Judgments upon a Head, by whom you have the Power to judge all the World.*

Of

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*Of Exercise and Experience.*

**A** Man may, by Custom and Example, fortify himself against Pain, Shame, Necessity, and such-like other Accidents ; but as to Death, we can experiment it but once, and are all Apprentices when we come to it. I cannot imagine any State so insupportable, as when a vigorous Soul is deeply afflicted, but wants the means of declaring its Pain ; which is much like the case of those who are sent to the Rack after their Tongues are cut out.

Every one makes use of Learning to his own advantage, provided he has the Courage to watch himself so narrowly, that he can apply it to his own Case. 'Tis a difficult undertaking, and far greater than it appears, to pursue a Path so extravagant as that of

Human

*in Sieur Montaigne's Essays.* 107  
human Wit, and to penetrate into  
all its deep and dark Recesses.

To speak less of a Man's self  
than what he really is, is folly,  
not modesty; and to take that for  
currant Pay, which is under a  
Man's value, is Cowardise and Pu-  
flianinity. According to *Aristo-*  
*tle*, no Virtue assists itself with  
Falshood, and Truth is never the  
subject-matter of Error. To speak  
more of one's self than is really  
true, is not only Presumption but  
Folly.

If any one be ravish'd with the  
conceit of his own Knowledge,  
whilst he looksonly on those below  
him, let him turn his Eye upward  
toward the Ages past, and his Pride  
will be abated, when he shall there  
find so many Thousand Wits, who  
trample him under foot. If he  
flatters himself for his Valour, let  
him remember *Scipio* and *Gesar*,  
and many other illustrious Com-  
manders, that leave him far be-  
hind them. Nor particula<sup>r</sup> good  
Quality

Quality can ever make any Man proud, who will at the same time reckon up his Imperfections and Infirmitie, and add to them the Nothingness of the present Condition of human Nature.

Of the Affection of Parents to Children.

**W**E often find our selves more taken with the Play and Childish Tricks of our Infants, than we are afterwards with their rational and most compleat Actions, as if we loved them only for our sport, as we love Monkes.

A Father is very miserable, who has no other hold of his Children's Affection, than the need they have of his Assistance: He must render himself worthy to be Respected for His Virtue and Wisdom, and Beloved for his Goodness. Even the very ashes of a rich

rich Matter have their value; and the Bones and Reliques of a Person of Honour inspire us with Respect and Reverence. No old Age can be so ruinous and offensive, in a Man who has liv'd in Honour, but it must be venerable. There is I know not what of servile, in the rigor and restraint that's us'd towards Children; and I am of opinion, that what cannot be done by Reason and Prudence, is never to be effected by Force.

The numbers of Children are no prejudice to any but the Gentry of the Nation, who are of a Condition wherein they have little to do, and Live, as we commonly say, upon their Rents. As to Military Men or Tradesmen, they encrease their Stock, and are as so many new Tools and Instruments wherewith to grow Rich: I would not put off my Cloaths before I am going to Bed; but a Father overloaded with Age and

InfirmitieS, and depriv'd by his Weakness and want of Health of the common Society of Men, wrongs himself and his Children, to hoard up a great Mass of use-  
less Treasure. He has liv'd long enough, if he be wise, to have a mind to strip himself, not, indeed, to his Shirt, but to That, and a good warm Night-gown: The remaining Pomps of which he has no further use, he ought voluntarily to surrender to those to whom, by the order of Nature, they belong: 'Tis reason he should leave the use of such things to them, since Nature has made him incapable of enjoying them himself.

I see well enough with whom 'tis lost time to bestow much care and time in doing them good Offices: Such are those with whom a Word ill-taken is sufficient to obliterate the Merits of ten Years.

The irregular Appetite and depraved Taste which Women have during

in Sieur Montaigne's *Essays*. I H

during the time of their being with Child, they have at all other times in their mind. According to Aristotle, a Poet is, of all other Artists, the fondest of his Work.

### OF BOOKS.

**K**Nowledge and Truth may dwell in us without Judgment, and Judgment may be here also without them; but a sincere Confession of our Ignorance is one of the fairest and surest Testimonies of Judgment that I know.

Terence does much more lively, represent his Gentleman than *Playes*. The best and most ancient Poets were so far from hunting after, that they carefully avoided, not only the Affectation of Fantastick Spanish and Italian Elevations, but even the softest and most gentle Touches. There is no Person of good Judgment who does

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does not incomparably more ad-  
mire, the uniform Sweetness and  
native Beauties of *Catullus* his E-  
pigrams; than all the sting's where-  
with *Martial* points the Tayls of  
his: The former, without being  
mov'd, makes himself sufficiently  
felt; the Reader has matter e-  
nough of Laughter throughout,  
he needs not tickle himself; but  
the latter stands in need of foreign  
Assistance: for they who have less  
of Wit must have the more of  
Body; and therefore he mounts  
on Horseback, because he is not  
able to stand on his own Legs.  
What a vast difference is there be-  
tween the *Aeneids* of *Virgil*, and  
the *Orlando Furioso* of *Aristo*?  
The former by dint of Wing makes  
his way with a lofty, and strong  
Flight, and always pursues his  
point; but the latter flutters and  
bops, as if were from branch to  
branch, not daring to trust his  
Wings, but in very short Flights,  
and pecking at every turn, for  
fear.

in Sieur Montaigne's *Essays*. I  
fear lest his Breath and Strength  
should fail him.

The Tracts of *Plutarch*, and the  
Epistles of *Seneca*, are the best of  
all their Writings. These two  
Authors agree for the most part  
in useful and true Opinions; and  
there is this Parallel between  
them, That Fortune brought them  
into the World about the same  
Age, That they were both Tu-  
tors to two *Roman* Emperors, Both  
sought out from foreign Coun-  
tries, Both Rich and Great Men.  
Their Doctrine is the Cream of  
Philosophy, and deliver'd in a  
plain and taking manner. *Plu-*  
*tarch* is more uniform and con-  
stant, *Seneca* more uncertain and  
various. The former labours hard  
and strives with all his force to  
fortify Virtue against Weakness,  
Fear and vicious Appetites; the  
latter seems more to slight their  
Power, and makes fewer Efforts  
against them. *Plutarch's* Opini-  
ons are Platonick, sweet, and a-  
greeable

greeable to Civil Society; those of the other are *Stoical* and *Epicurean*, more remote from the common usage of the World. *Sene-  
ca* is full of brisk Touches and Sallies: *Plutarch* abounds with things that move you more. 'Twas no great fault in *Cicero* to make bad Verses, but it would be one not to think that his Verses were unworthy of him.

The only good Histories are those that have been writ by the Persons themselves, that commanded in the Affairs whereof they Write, or had a share in the Conduct of them, or at least who have had the Conduct of other Affairs of the same nature: Such are almost all the *Greek* and *Roman* Histories. What can a Man expect from a Physician who will undertake to Write of War, or from a mere Scholar, treating of the Designs of Princes?

Of  
the People

## Of VERTUE.

**T**H E Word *Virtue* imports, I know not what, greater and more active, than mere- ly for a Man to suffer himself by a happy Temper, to be led, quietly and gently into the Path of Reason. He that by a Natural Sweetness and Easiness should despise the Injuries done to him, would, doubtless, do a brave and commendable thing ; But he who being nettled to the quick, and transported with Rage for the Injury done him, should yet so fortify himself with the Arms of Reason against the furious desire of Revenge, as to Master his Passion after a great Conflict with himself, would doubtless do a great deal more than the former. One of the Antients refus'd the Riches, which Fortune presented to him

by very lawful means, because said he, *I am to contend with Poverty.* *Socrates*, methinks, put himself upon a harder Tryal, who kept for the Exercise of his Patience an ill-natur'd Scolding Wife, which was Fighting at Sharps.

The Names of *Good Nature* and *Innocence* are sometimes Words of Contempt. Many Vertues, such as *Charity*, *Sobriety* and *Temperance*, may proceed from Bodily defects. *Constancy* in Danger, the contempt of Death, and *Patience* in Misfortunes, are often found in Men; for want of judging aright of such Accidents, and not apprehending them for such as they really are. Want of Apprehension and *Sottishness*, do sometimes counterfeit vertuous Actions.

After they had accustom'd themselves at *Rome* to the Spectacles of the Slaughter of Animals, they proceeded to those of the Slaughter of Men, and particularly of

*Gla-*

Gladiators. Nature herself seems to have imprinted in Man a certain instinct to Inhumanity ; for no-body takes pleasure in seeing Beasts play together, but every-one is delighted with seeing them tear and dismember one another.

### *Of RELIGION.*

**T**HIS Faith alone that heartily and firmly embraces the deep Mysteries of our Religion ; yet withal I do not say but 'tis a brave and laudable Attempt, to accommodate the Natural Faculties, wherewith God has endow'd us, to the Service of Faith. We must assist it with all the Reason we have, but always with this Belief, That we do not fancy it depends upon us, or that our Endeavours and Arguments can attain to such a Divine Knowledge. If we laid hold upon God, by the Mediation of

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of a lively Faith, with a firm Reli-  
ance upon Himself, and not upon  
our own Strength, the love of  
Novelty, the constraint of Princes,  
the success of a Party, and the  
fortuitous change of our Opinions,  
would never have power to alter  
our Faith. If we were any-ways  
touch'd with this Ray of Divi-  
nity, it would appear through-  
out; and not only our Words but  
our Actions would carry its bright-  
ness and lustre. 'Tis just cause of  
shame to us, that among all the  
Human Sects, there was never any  
that believ'd their Doctrine, but  
conform'd his Life and Behaviour  
to it, whatsoever Difficulties and  
strange Notions it impos'd upon  
him. Compare our Manners with  
those of a *Mahometan* or *Pagan*,  
and you'll find we always fall short  
of them; whereas it should be said  
of us, Are they so Just, so Char-  
itable, so Good? Then they are  
Christians. The peculiar mark of  
the Truth of our Faith, ought to  
be

be our Vertue. Some impose upon the World, by making them believe what they do not ; but others, more in number, deceive themselves, not being able to discern what it is to Believe. God owes his extraordinary Assistance to our *Faith* and *Religion*, and not to our Passions. I plainly perceive that we do not willingly perform any Offices in Devotion, but those that suit with our Passions. There's no Hostility accounted so Excellent, as that which is cloak'd with a pretence of the Christian Religion. Our Zeal performs Wonders, when it secords our Inclinations to Hatred, Cruelty, Ambition, Avarice, and Rebellion : But when we move against the Hair towards Bounty, Charity and Temperance, unless some rare and happy Temper, as it were by Miracle, prompts us to it, we stir neither Hand and Foot. Our Religion is design'd to extirpate our Vices, but by mischance it nourishes

risches and excites them. I speak it to our shame: Did we believe in God, I do not say with a Divine Faith, but with such a common Belief, as we afford to one of our Companions and Friends, we should love him above all things for that Infinite Goodness and Beauty; which appear with such lustre in him; at least he would have an equal share in our Affections, with Riches, Pleasures, Glory and our Friends: And yet the best of us is not so much afraid to injure him, as he is to injure his Neighbour, his Kinsman, or his Master.

Did we believe the great Promises of Eternal Happiness, and receive them with the same Respect as we do a Philosophical Lecture, we should not be seiz'd with so great horror at the approach of Death. But we are Christians, by the same Title that we are *Perigordins* and *Germans*: Another Country, other Witnesses, the like

Pro-

Promises and Threatnings, after the same manner imprint on our Minds a quite contrary Belief.

There are few Men so obstinate in their Atheism, says *Plato*, but a pressing danger will reduce them to an acknowledgement of the Divine Majesty: This Reflexion does no ways concern a true Christian: 'Tis proper for human and mortal Religions to gain Belief, by a Conduct that's altogether human. What kind of Faith can we expect that should be which Cowardize and want of Courage does establish in us? A pleasant kind of Faith, that would not believe what it believes, but for want of Courage not to believe it!

Atheism is an Opinion so unnatural and monstrous, that it very hardly gains admittance into a humane Understanding, tho a Man be never so insolent and disorderly. Human Reason and Discourses, are like a confus'd and barren

barren Matter, until the Grace of God puts them in form, which alone gives them shape and value. As the vertuous Actions of *Plato* and *Socrates* were vain and unprofitable, because they had not for their end, the Love and Service of the Creator of all Things, for want of knowing him: So our Imaginations and Discourses have a kind of Body, but 'tis only a shapeless Mass, without Fashion, and without Light, if Faith and the Grace of God be not added to it. Men willingly wrest the sayings of others to favour their own Opinions. To an Atheist all Writings tend to Atheism; he corrupts the most innocent and soundest matter with his own Venom.

Man is the most miserable and frailest of all Creatures, and yet, at the same time, the proudest. From what comparison, betwixt Animals and us, does a Man conclude the stupidity he attributes to them? When I play with my Cat,

Cat, who knows whether I do not make her more sport than she does me? We mutually divert one another with Apish Tricks.

I have known, in my time, a hundred Artificers, and as many Labourers, wiser than the Rectors of an University, and whom I would rather choose to resemble. If a Man were wise, he would measure the true value of every thing by its Usefulness to human Life. Old *Rome* to me seems to have been of much greater value, both for Peace and War, than that learn'd *Rome* that ruin'd it self. The first Law that ever God gave to Man, was a Law of pure Obedience, a plain and naked Command, which afforded no occasion for Enquiry or Dispute, because to Obey is the proper Office of a Rational Soul, which owns a Heavenly Governor and Benefactor. The Plague of Man is the Opinion of his own Knowledge; and therefore it is that Ignorance is so recommended to

us by our Religion, as a proper means to Faith, and Obedience. It seems that Nature, for our Consolation in this miserable and wretched State, has only given us Presumption for our Inheritance. The Gods, says a Philosopher, have Health in Essence, Sickness in Idea only: But Man, on the contrary, enjoys his Goods in Fancy, his Evils in Essence.

From whence arises the most subtil Folly, but from the most subtil Wisdom? As great Friendships spring from great Enmities, and vigorous Healths from mortal Diseases; so from the quick agitations of our Soul, proceed our most wonderful and foolish Frenzies. We must in some sort be made Beasts, that we may become wise. Incivility, Ignorance, Simplicity and Roughness, are the common Companions of Innocence; but Politeness, Knowledge and Subtlety, have almost always Malice and Impiety in their Train.

Humility, Obedience and Affability ( which are the principal things that maintain human Society ) require an empty and teachable Soul, which has no high conceit of it self. Christians know better than others, how Natural and Original an Evil Curiosity in Man is. The Thirst of Knowledge, and the Desire to become more wise, was the first ruin of Mankind. 'Tis Pride that makes a Man turn out of the common Road, and embrace Novelties: This makes him rather choose to be Head of a Troop that wanders in By-paths, to be a Teacher of Errors and Lies, than to be a Disciple in the School of Truth.

To meet with a thing incredible, is an occasion for Christians to believe, 'tis so much the more according to Reason, by how much it is above human Reason: If it were purely according to our Reason, it would no longer be a Mystery, nor a Miracle.

We do well to attribute to God Power, Truth and Justice ; they are words which signify some great thing ; but what that is, we neither see nor conceive at all. Our Faith is not of our own acquiring, but purely the Gift of another's Bounty. 'Tis not by our own Understanding that we have received our Religion, but by Divine Authority. The weakness of our Judgment does more assist us than the strength of it, and our blindness more than the clearness of our Sight. 'Tis more by means of our Ignorance than of our Knowledge, that we know any thing of Divine Wisdom. it happens to Men truly learn'd, as to ears of Corn, they shoot up and raise their heads high, and pert while they are empty, but when full and swell'd with Grain, in their Maturity, they begin to flag and droop. The Ignorance that knows it self, Judges and Condemns itself, is not a perfect

Ignorance, which to be, it must be ignorant of it self. The things that are most unknown, are most proper to be Deify'd. 'Tis a wonderful Sottishness of human Understanding, to make Gods of Men in our present Condition, whose imperfections we ought to know ; and to attribute to them Anger, Revenge, Marriage, Love, Jealousie, our Members and Bones, our Fevers and Pleasures, our Death and Funeral. Our Speech has its defects and weaknesses, as well as all other things : Most of the occasions which trouble the World, proceed from Grammarians. Our Law-Suits arise from a Dispute about the Interpretation of the Laws, and Warrs, for the most part, have their rise from the want of clear Expressions in the Agreements and Treaties of Peace between Princes.

Hold on in the common Road, 'tis to no purpose to be so very Fine and Subtle ; remember what

the *Italian Proverb* says, *Chi troppo, S' affoliglia si scavessa*; Whosoever makes himself too Wise, becomes a Fool.

'Tis very reasonable to confine human Wit within as narrow Bounds as is possible: In Study, as in other things, its steps and advances ought to be numbred and directed aright, the bounds of its Inquisition should be mark'd out by Art; 'tis curb'd by Laws, Customs, Precepts, by mortal and immortal Penalties and Rewards, and yet we see it breaks loose from all these Restraints. There are few Souls so regular and stout, that they may be safely trusted with their own Conduct: 'Tis more expedient to put them under Pupillage. Wit is a dangerous Weapon, even to the Possessor, if he knows not how to use it with Discretion. There is no kind of Beast, to whom a Head-board may be more justly given, to keep his Looks down and confin'd to his Feet, that he

may

may not be suffer'd to wander here and there, out of the Paths which Custom and the Laws have mark'd out for him.

We do no more take notice what the Coin weighs and is really worth, but every one receives it according to the Estimate that common Approbation puts upon it: The Alloy is not disputed, but how much it is current for. Thus we receive all things alike, Physick as we do Geometry and the Tricks of Hocus-pocus, Enchantments, the Correspondence of Spirits, the Apparitions of Departed Souls, and Divinations: All things pass for current Pay, without any let and contradiction, even to the Philosopher's Stone, tho' it be never so vain and ridiculous.

Whatever is Taught us, we ought always to remember, that 'tis Man that gives, and Man that receives; 'tis a mortal Hand that represents it to us, and a mortal Hand that accepts it. The things

that come to us from Heaven have the sole Mark of Truth, and the sole Right and Authority to persuade us.

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### *Of different Judgments.*

**D**O not Joy and Gaiety make us receive things with a quite different Air, than anxious Care and Melancholy? Do you believe that the Verses of *Catullus* and *Sappho* do please an old waspish Miser, as they do a vigorous and amorous young Man? They are not only Fevers, Debauches, and great Accidents, that overthrow our Judgments, but the least things in the World will do the same. Give an Advocate a plain Account of your Cause, he returns you a doubtful and uncertain Answer, by which you find him indifferent which side he takes; but if you see him Justly, then he discovers a new

a new Light in the Business, he believes it to be a good Cause, and doubts not of the Success of it. The two natural ways of entring into the Cabinet of the Gods, there to foresee the Course of Destiny, are Fury and Sleep. 'Tis a noble Enthusiasm which makes Men Prophets, and by Sleeping we become sometimes Diviners. Our Wisdom is less wise than our Folly; our Dreams are more worth than our most sedate Discourses.

The proper Office of Magnanimity is to admire nothing.

'Tis to no purpose that we know these Tresses were borrow'd from a Page or a Lacquey, that this Vermilion came from *Spain*; and this Ceruss from *Sea*; our Sight will nevertheless compel us, in spite of all our Reason, to own one Woman Beautiful and Lovely with all these ornamental Disguises. Few Men when they Dye are perswaded that their last Hour is come, and there is nothing wherein

wherein we are more deluded with deceitful Hope: It never ceases to whisper in our Ears, Others have been much Sicker, without Dying; my Condition is not so desperate as 'tis thought, and come the worst to the worst, God has often wrought other Miracles, and can yet raise me up again. We are, I know not how, double in ourselves, which is the cause that what we believe of the vanity of human Affairs, we do not believe, and we cannot disengage our selves from what we condemn.

Of G L O R Y.

Vertue is a very vain and frivolous thing, if it derives its value from Glory. So to order it, that our brave Actions may be seen and known, is purely the work of Fortune. 'Tis Chance that advances us to Glory according to its own Caprice. I have often seen her march before Merit, and as often exceed it. He that first likend Glory to a Shadow, gave a just Character of it; for sometimes like a Shadow it goes before the Body, and sometimes it very far exceeds it in length. 'Tis not for outward show that our Soul is to play its part, but for our selves within, where no Eyes can pierce but our own. Tho I should not follow the right way, because it is right, yet I should follow it, because I have found

found, by experience, at the foot of the Account, that 'tis commonly the best and happiest way. An ancient Mariner said to *Neptune* in a great Storm; O God! thou may'st save me if thou wilt, and if thou wilt, thou may'st destroy me; but however I'll steer my Rudder true. I care not so much what I am in the opinion of others, as what I am in my own. I would be Rich of my self, and not by borrowing. We love rather a great Reputation than a good one, and are more solicitous what Men speak of us, than how they speak; and provided that our Names are often in Men's Mouths, we care not in what manner they are mention'd.

*Of Presumption.*

Presumption represents us to our selves as other Men than we really are; like the Passion of Love, that lends Beauties and Graces to the Object of it. We are nothing but Ceremony, and leave the Substance of things; we hold by the Branches, and quit the Trunk and Body. Ceremony so far carries us away, that it forbids us to express in Words, Things natural and lawful, and we obey it; but when Reason forbids us to do things unlawful and ill, nobody obeys it. The Favours of Princes, when they are scatter'd indifferently, make no great impression; if they are given without distinction, they are also without effect. A Man may play the Fool in every thing else, but an indifferent Poet is not to be en-  
dured.

dur'd. I would to God this Sentence were written over the Doors of all our Printers, to forbid the entrance of so many wicked Rimer's.

The Beauty of Stature is the only Beauty of Men; the other Beauties belong to Women. The desire of Riches is more quickened by the use, than by the need of them; and the vertue of Moderation is more rare than that of Patience. A Man does often lose more by defending his Vineyard, than if he should give it up.

We must not always speak all that we know, that were folly; but what a Man says should be what he thinks, otherwise 'tis Knavery. The only advantage a Man can gain by Lying and Dissembling upon all occasions, is this, That he shall not be believed even when he speaks Truth.

The more a Man mistrusts his Memory, the worse it is: We must not earnestly solicit it, nor press

press it, for this is the way to confound it; and after it once begins to stagger, the more I sound it, the more it is perplex'd: It will serve me at its own hours, not at mine.

We taste nothing in this World that's pure and unmix'd: The weakness of our present State will not permit us to enjoy things in their natural Simplicity and Purity. The Elements we make use of are all mix'd and alter'd: We must debase Gold by some mixture of Alloy, that it may be serviceable to us.

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*Of the Indiscretion of the French.*

WHAT an Indiscreet Nation are we! We are not content to make our Follies and Vices known to the World, only by Report; but we must go into foreign Nations to show them there what

what Fools we are. Put three Frenchmen into the Desarts of *Lybia*, they will not live a month together without Fighting, which would make any one say, That this Voyage was undertaken on purpose to give strangers the pleasure of Laughing at us.

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*All things have their Season.*

**A**LL things, even those that are best, have their proper Season; and a Man may say his Pater-Noster out of Time. The greatest Vice that Wisemen observe in us, is this, That our desire continually grows young again: We are always beginning anew to live; whereas we should study sometimes to be sensible of old Age. There are who are learning to speak, when they should be learning to be silent for ever. A Man may always Study, but

but he must not always go to School. What a contemptible thing is an old School-boy !

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### Of ANGER.

There's no Passion that more disturbs and clouds our Judgment than Anger. If a Judge should condemn a Criminal in the heat of his Passion, he himself would deserve to be punish'd with Death. Fathers and School-Masters ought not to chastise Children and Scholars in their Anger; for then 'tis no longer Correction, but Revenge. Chastisement is instead of Physick to Children; but would any one endure a Physician, who were provok'd and enrag'd against his Patient? While our Pulse beats high, and we feel a great Commotion in ourselves, let us defer the business; things will appear quite other-

otherwise to us when we are calm and cool; for else it is Passion that commands and speaks, and not we.

When rash Anger frequently arises in us, it grows into Custom, and renders it self contemptible. Your Anger against a Servant for Theft is not regarded, because it is the same you have often fain into against him, for not washing a Glass to the best advantage.

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## BOOK III.

### *Of Profit and Honesty.*

**N**O Man is exempt from speaking foolish things, but the worst on't is, when a Man studies to play the Fool. There is nothing useless in Nature, not so much as Unprofitableness it self.

Who

Who would not abhor Perfidiousness, since *Tiberius* refus'd it in a matter of the greatest importance to himself? Word was sent him from *Germany*, that if he thought fit, they would rid him of *Ariminius*, by Poyson, who was the most Potent Enemy the *Romans* had: He return'd Answer *That the People of Rome were wont to revenge themselves of their Enemies by open ways, and with their Swords in their hands, and not by Clandestine Means and Treachery.*

In the midst of our Compassion, we feel I know not what ill-natur'd Joy in seeing others suffer. Vices are serviceable to maintain Civil Society, as Poysons are to preserve Health: They become excusable, because they are of use to us; and common Necessity blots out, in a manner, our Natural Sense of their intrinsical Evil. There are Citizens in all States, who Sacrifice their Honour and

and Conscience to the publick Good; like those of old, so famous in History, who Sacrific'd their Lives for the safety of their Country. The publick Weal requires, that a Man should Betray, Lye, and Massacre; let us leave this Commission to Men that are more Obedient and Supple than we are. A common Cause, however just, moves me but moderately, and without Animosity. Anger and Hatred are always beyond the Duty of Justice: These Passions are only useful to such as do not keep themselves strictly to their Duty by mere Reason. All just Intentions are temperate of themselves; if otherwise, they degenerate and become Seditious and Unlawful. Double-dealing Men are useful in bringing in, but we must take care, that they carry out as little as is possible. What is intrusted to me as a Secret, I Religiously conceal; but I take as few Trusts of

of that nature upon me as I can. The Secrets of Princes are a troublesome Burthen to those who are not interested in them. I would not be reputed a Servant so Affectionate, nor so Loyal, as to be thought fit to betray any one. He that is unfaithful to himself, is excusable if he be so to his Master.

Princes do not accept Men by halves, but despise limited and conditional Services. I cannot help it; I frankly tell them how far I can go; for a Slave I ought not to be to any thing but Reason, and even that I can hardly submit to. Every one should make the same Vow to himself, that the Kings of *Egypt* made their Judges solemnly Swear, That they should never do any thing contrary to their Conscience, tho never so much commanded to do it, even by themselves. If Treachery is in any case excusable, 'tis only when 'tis practised to chastise

chastise and betray Treachery. A Learned Man is not learn'd in all things; but an able Man is sufficient throughout, even in Ignorance it self.

### *Of REPENTANCE.*

**R**EASON extinguishes all other Sorrows, but begets that of Repentance, which is so much the more grievous, because it is bred within us; as the heat and cold of Agues are more severe than the same Qualities are when they proceed from external Causes. There is I know not what Pleasure in doing well, which gives us inward Joy, and a certain generous Boldness, which always accompanines a good Conscience. 'Tis no small satisfaction for a Man to feel himself preserv'd from the Infection of such a degenerate Age, and be able to say to himself,

himself, *Whoever could penetrate into my Soul, would find that I am neither guilty of Envy, nor Unfaithfulness, nor any of those other Vices which the Licentiousness of the Times has authoriz'd.* This natural Joy which accompanies Virtue, is the only Reward that we can never fail of.

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*Of Virtue and Wisdom in common Conversation.*

THE Approbation of others, is no certain Recompence of virtuous Actions, especially in a corrupt Age, wherein Vice has gain'd a greater esteem than Virtue. God defend me from being a Man of Honour, according to the descriptions of Honour I daily see every one make to himself: What before were Vices, are now reputed Customs and Manners. You your self only know, whe- Hther

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ther you are Mean-spirited or Generous, Treacherous or Faithful: Others see you not, and only guess at you by uncertain Conjectures; they do not so much see your natural Inclination as your artificial Disguise. Rely not therefore on their Opinions, but stick to your own, which is certainly true. Few Men have been admir'd by their own Domesticks: In my Country of *Gascony*, they look upon it as a Drollery to see me in Print; the further off I am Read from Home, the better I am esteem'd. I am fain to purchase Printers in *Guienne*, elsewhere they purchase me. The management of our Behaviour is a heavy and melancholick Virtue: To enter a Breach, carry an Embassy, Govern a People, are Actions of Renown; but to Sell and Pay, Love and Hate, Laugh and Play; to Converse sweetly and familiarly with a Man's Self and his Family; to avoid all Baseness and Lying, are qualities more rare and difficult,

cult, and yet less remarkable. Upon great and important Occasions we are commonly more excited by the desire of Glory, than by Conscience; whereas the shortest way to arrive at Glory, would be to do that out of a Principle of Conscience, which we would do for Glory only. The Virtue of *Alexander* appears to me much less vigorous, tho he had a glorious Theatre to Act upon, than that of *Socrates*, in his mean and obscure Employment. I can easily conceive *Socrates* in the place of *Alexander*, but *Alexander* in the place of *Socrates* I cannot. Who-soever shall ask the one, What he can do; he will Answer, *Subdue the World*; and if any one ask the other the same Question, he will say, *I can Live according to the Rules of a Rational Nature*; which is a Knowledge more general, important and useful. The excellency of a Soul does not consist in flying High, but in walking

according to Rule; its Greatness does not appear in the Grandeur of Living, but in Mediocrity.

We ought to love Temperance and Chastity for themselves, because God has commanded them; but what we are reduc'd to by Catarrhs and the Cholick, is neither true Chastity nor Temperance. The Peevishness and Infirmities of Old Age, imprint more Wrinkles on our Mind than our Face, and make us sowre and musty. Our Life is an unequal and irregular Motion: A Man is not a Friend to himself, and much less his own Master, but he is an Eternal Slave, while he is so chain'd to his own Inclinations, that he cannot stir one inch from them, nor wring his Neck by any means out of the Collar.

There is no Employment either more Strong or more Weak than that of entertaining a Man's own Thoughts: The greatest Souls make it their whole busines; 'tis

the

the Employment of the Gods, says *Aristotle*, from whence both their Happiness and ours proceed. There is no Knowledge more useful, than that, Of, *what a Man can* ; 'twas the ordinary saying of *Socrates*, which he was in love with, al ; a Motto of great Sense. We should direct and limit our Desires to such things as are most natural, and most easily acquir'd. Is it not a foolish Humor to separate my self from a Thousand to whom Fortune has link'd me, to cleave to one or two that are without the bounds of my Conversation. I could wish to have a Soul of different Stories, that knows both how to stretch and slacken itself, that finds itself at ease under all the varieties of Fortune ; that can Discourse with a Neighbour of his Building, Hunting, or any little Quarrel between him and another ; that can Chat with a Carpenter or Gardiner with pleasure. I envy those who can be familiar

with the meanest of their Followers, and dislike the Advice of *Plato*, That Men should always Speak in a Magisterial Tone to their Servants. In the exercise of Wit, we have for the most part more need of Lead than of Wings, of Coolness and Composure, than of Ardour and Agitation. But above all things, in my opinion, 'tis an egregious piece of Folly, to put on the Gravity of a Man of Understanding among those that know nothing, and to speak to them in Print with a lofty Tone. We must accommodate our selves to the Capacity of those with whom we Converse, and sometimes affect even Ignorance itself; we must lay aside all Subtilty and strength of Argument; 'tis enough in common Discourse to keep to Sense and Decency. The Ladies who affect to appear Learned, quote *Plato* and St. *Thomas* for such things as the next Conier could testifie as well: They con-

ceal their own Beauties under others that are none of theirs. But certainly 'tis a great Folly to put out their own Light, that they may shine with a borrow'd Lustre. Their natural Faculties are interr'd and bury'd under Art: They do not sufficiently understand that the World has nothing Fairer than themselves, and that they are of so much worth, as to honour the Arts, and Paint even Painting itself. What need have they of any thing, but to Live Belov'd and Respected? And they have and know but too much for this.

Poetry is a Diversion proper for Ladies; 'tis a wanton and jocular Art, full of Subtilty and Artifice, all Pleasure, and all Show, just like themselves. Local Solitude does rather scatter my thoughts than recollect them: I throw my self upon Affairs of State, and the World possesses me the more when I am alone. At the *Louvre*, and in

the bustle of the Court, I fold my self up in my own Skin, and the Crowd beats me back upon my self. 'Tis not only in the great Affairs of Kingdoms and States that our Wit shows its Beauty and Vigor; it shows itself and sparkles, at least as much, in private Conferences. I understand my People, even by their Silence and Smiles; and better discover them perhaps at *Table* than in the *Council*. One of the Ancients said, That he could know good Wrestlers by seeing them only walk in the Streets.

That Man, in my opinion, <sup>2113</sup> is very miserable, who has no place at Home where to be by himself; where to entertain himself, or conceal himself from others. Ambition sufficiently plagues her Profelytes by keeping them always in show, like the Statue of a publick place; they have not so much as a Retirement to retreat into. The Regulars who are oblig'd by their

their Rule to Live always together, appear in this to be too austere; for I think it to be much more tolerable to be always alone, than never to be so.

For the Consolation of the Afflicted, especially if they be Women, we must sometimes make use of Diversion. A Man goes the wrong way to work if he opposes this Passion; for opposition does but irritate, and make them more obstinate in their Sorrow; and they think they have reason to Weep, because you set your self to argue against their Tears: Thus we see it commonly happens, that what I have carelessly let fall in Discourse, without Reflexion or Design, if another lays hold of it so as to controvert it, then I stand my ground; I espouse and maintain it with much more heat, than a thing wherein I have a real Interest. We do not much consider Things in Substance; and as they are really in themselves, but they

are little and superficial Circumstances that wound us. Plutarch himself laments his Daughter for the little apish Tricks of her Infancy. The remembrance of a Farewel, of the particular grace of an Action, of a last Recommendation; these are the things that afflict us. The sight of *Cæsar's Robe* troubled all *Rome*, which was more than his Death had done. Even the sound of Names afflict us more sometimes than the things themselves: As when we hear these or suchlike Words, *My poor Master*; or, *My great Friend*, *Alas, my dear Father*, or, *My sweet Daughter*. When these Repetitions move my Compassion, and I consider them more narrowly, I find it only a Grammatical Complaint; I am wounded with the Words, and Tone, as the Exclamations of Preachers do very oft work more upon their Auditors than their Reasons. I look upon Death carelessly, when I view it as the Universal

versal period of Life; I insult over it in gross, but in retail it domineers over me. The Tears of a Lacquey, the touch of a friendly Hand, which is a common Consolation, Discourages and Dispirits me.

Wisdom has its Excess, and has no less need of Moderation than Folly. *Plato* ordains, that Old Men should be present at the Exercises, Dances and Sports of Young People, that they may rejoice at the Activity and Beauty of Body in others, which they have lost in themselves, and call to mind the Grace and Comeliness of that flourishing Age. I love a gay and civil Wisdom, and fly from all Sourness and Austerity of Manners: A rude and gruff Mien is always suspected by me. *Socrates* had always a modest Countenance, but withal Serene and Smileing. Vertue is a pleasant and agreeable Quality. I hate a froward and pensive Spirit, which

slips over all the pleasures of Life, and sticks and feeds it self upon Misfortunes; like Flies that cannot stop upon a well-polish'd Body, but fix upon rough places; or like Cupping-glasses which attract and suck the worst Blood. The worst of my Actions do not appear to me so foul and base, as I find it mean and cowardly not to dare to own them. Every one is Wary and Discreet in Confession, but Men ought to be so in Action. The boldness of doing ill, is in some sort compensated and punish'd by the boldness of confessing it: Whoever will oblige himself to tell all, should oblige himself to do nothing that he must be forced to conceal. A Man must see and study his Vice, that he may correct it: They who conceal it from others, commonly conceal it from themselves. The Diseases of the Body are better discover'd when they encrease: We find that to be the **Goat**, which

which at first we call'd a Rheumatism, or a Strain: The Diseases of the Soul grow more obscure proportionably to their encrease, and the most Sick are the least Sensible. To keep Secrets well, a Man must be close by Nature and not by Obligation: 'Tis little worth in the Service of a Prince to keep his Secrets, if a Man be not a Lyar to boot.

'Tis pity but an Ill-Man should be a Fool also, for his fine and decent Behaviour palliates his Vice: This Rough-cast belongs only to a good and sound Wall, which deserves to be preserv'd and whit'd. He that does all things for Honour and Glory, what can he think to gain by shewing himself to the World in a Vizor, and concealing what he truly is, from the Knowledge of the People? Commend a crooked Man for his Stature, he has reason to take it for an Affront: If you are a Coward, and Men com-

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which at first we call'd a Rheumatism, or a Strain: The Diseases of the Soul grow more obscure proportionably to their encrease, and the most Sick are the least Sensible. To keep Secrets well, a Man must be close by Nature and not by Obligation: 'Tis little worth in the Service of a Prince to keep his Secrets, if a Man be not a Lyar to boot.

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mend you for your Valour, Is it of you that they speak? Surely they take you for another. They who do not rightly know themselves, may feed themselves with false Commendations; that cannot I do, who see my self and search my very Reins and Heart, and know very well what is my Due. I am content to be less commended, provided I am better known.

'Tis a Token of the Value and Excellency of a Married State, that so few are observ'd to be happy in it. Marriage may be fitly resembled to those Cages, where the Birds without die through desire to get in, and those within pine themselves to Death through despair of getting out. Socrates being ask'd, which was more convenient to take a Wife or not; *Let a Man take which Course he will*, said he, *he'll be sure to repent.* Extravagant Humors, such as mine, which hate all sorts

of Restraint, are not suited to a Married State: Might I have had my own will, I would not have Married Wisdom her self if she would have had me. Few Men have made a Wife of a Mistress that have not repented it. You may see in the Fable what an unhappy Life *Jupiter* leads with his Mistress, whom he had lov'd so passionately. Love is commonly cur'd by Marriage. *Isocrates* was wont to say, "That the City of "Athens" pleas'd as Ladies do, whom "Men Court for Love: Every one "lov'd to come thither to take a "walk, and pass away his time; "but none lov'd to espouse it, that "is, to dwell and settle there.

I reckon an artificial and forc'd Beauty, one of the greatest deformities of Women; a wrinkled Face, which plainly confesses old Age, is not half so ugly as one that is Painted and Daub'd with Cosmeticks.

*Of the Liberality of Princes.*

**T**IS a kind of Pusillanimity in Monarchs, and an Argument, that they do not sufficiently understand themselves, when they study to procure themselves Honour and Esteem by their excessive Expences. It were indeed excusable in a Prince, who should be in a foreign Country, where the People were strangers to him; but in his own Dominions, where he can do every thing that he pleases, he ought to derive all his Glory from his Sovereign Dignity. *Isocrates* advis'd his King to be splendid in Plate and Furniture, because that is an Expence laid out upon things durable, which descend to his Successors, and that he should avoid all vain Magnificence which will presently vanish away. *Demosthenes*

mosthenes mightily inveighs against that Law of the City which assign'd the publick Money for the Pomp of their publick Plays and Festivals : He would have their Greatness appear in the number of their Ships well-equippt, and good Armies well-provided for. Liberality it self does not shine with its true Lustre when it is in a Sovereign Hand : Private Men have the most Right to it ; for if we consider the Matter exactly , a Prince has nothing that's properly his own, he owes even himself to others. The Governors of young Princes, in exhorting them to Liberality, do more regard their own Profit, than that of their Master. Princes commonly find themselves Prodigal, before they can be reputed Liberal ; and yet this Reputation is of little worth, when 'tis purchas'd at the price of other Royal Vertues, 'Tis the only one, said the Tyrant *Dionysius*, that is consistent.

consistent with Tyranny it self. If the Liberality of a Prince be without Discretion, I had rather he were Covetous. Royal Virtue seems chiefly to consist in Justice; and of all the parts of Justice, that best denotes a King which accompanies his Liberality. An immoderate Bounty is a very improper means to gain the Peoples Good-will, for it disobliges more than it wins. The Subjects of a Prince profuse in Gifts, grow extravagant in asking, and govern themselves not by Reason, but Example. There's no end on't as we use it: We never reckon what we have receiv'd, but are all for having more: The more a Prince exhausts himself in giving, the poorer he grows in Friends. How can he be able to satisfie those Desires, that increase still the more as they are fill'd. He whose Mind runs upon Taking, never thinks of what he has taken: There's nothing more

more proper to Covetousness than Ingratitude: The Aids which the People give to Kings, are no otherwise but only in Name.

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### *Of the Inconvenience of Greatness.*

**G**reatness in general has this manifest advantage, that it can lower it self when it pleases, and so it has the choice both of the one, or the other Condition; it does, indeed, appear to me, that we value it at too high a rate, and that we also over-value the Resolution of those, who (as we have either seen or heard) have despis'd, or renounc'd it of their own accord. Greatness is not so very convenient, but it may be refus'd without a Miracle. The Glory that attends this Refusal, does very much flatter our Vanity; and, perhaps, there may be more Ambition

Ambition in it, than in the Desire and Enjoyment of Greatness; for Ambition never behaves it self more suitably to it self, than when it proceeds by secret and unfrequented ways.

The most painful and difficult Employment in the World, is worthily to discharge the Office of a King. 'Tis hard to keep within bounds, when we have a boundless Power. There is not, perhaps, any thing more pleasant in the Converse of Men, than the Tryals we make one against another out of Emulation, whether in the Exercises of the Body, or those of the Mind, wherein the Sovereign Greatness cannot bear a part. Upon the account of paying them respect, we do in effect treat them injuriously in this particular; for if we discover, that in such Exercises they have the least Passion to get the better, there is none who will not make it his Business to give them

them the Victory, and choose rather to betray his own Glory than blemish theirs ; and to that end he only will employ so much strength against them as may serve to advance their Honour. An ancient Philosopher said, "That the Sons "of Princes learn'd nothing right "but to ride the great Horse ; for "in all other Exercises, every one "bends and yields to them ; but "a Horse, who is neither a Flat- "terer nor a Courtier, throws the "Son of a King with no more Re- "morse, than if he were the Son "of a Porter. 'Tis pity a Man should be so potent, that all things must give way to him: Your Fortune removes you to too great a distance from all familiar Conversation, and throws you upon a solitary Condition. That Power whereby you can easily make all things bow under you, is an Enemy to all sorts of Pleasure. This is to slide and not to walk ; This is to Sleep and not to Live.

Give

Give a Man an absolute Sovereign Power, and you throw him into an Abyss; he must beg for some Disturbance and Opposition as one would for an Alms; without it all his good Qualities are useless and lost, which cannot be perceiv'd but by comparison. The Dignity of a King stifflies and consumes all the other true and excellent Qualities; they are, as it were, swallow'd up, and buried in Royalty. That external Splendor wherewith they are encompass'd, hides and conceals them from us; our Sight is broken and scatter'd, being stopt and fill'd with this dazzling Light.

*Of the Art of Conferring.*

WHEN all things are well summ'd up, a Man never speaks of himself without loss ; for if a Man condemns himself, others believe more of him than he says ; if he praises himself they believe nothing of what he says. The Elder *Cato* said, *That the Wise may learn more of Fools, than Fools can of the Wise.* When I cannot mend my Behaviour by good Examples, I make use of bad ones, which are never wanting. A good Horseman does not so much teach me how to ride as an awkward Proctor, or a *Venetian* on Horseback ; and a Clownish way of speaking does more refine my Language, than the quaintest Dialect. The foolish and ridiculous Look of another makes me more careful of mine own, that it be  
Grave

Grave and Graceful. I am for that which Wounds, Pricks and Rouses me, rather than that which pleases and tickles me. The study of Books is a languishing and feeble Motion, whereas Conference has something of Life and Spirit in it, which at once both Instructs and Exercises.

I love to Discourse and Dispute, but 'tis only with few Men, and for my own pleasure; for to do it as an Entertainment to Great Persons, and to make a pompous show of a Man's Wit and Eloquence, is, in my opinion, very unbecoming a Man of Honour. Impertinence is a very scurvy Quality; but not to be able to endure it, is another sort of Disease not much inferior to Impertinence it self. In Conferences and Disputes, when we meet with opposition, we do not consider whether it be just or no, but how to recriminate upon the Opponent, and instead of stretching out our

Arms towards him, we thrust out our Claws. I could suffer my self to be rudely treated by my Friends, in such words as these, You are a Fool, and talk you know not what. I love bold Expressions among brave Men, and that they should speak freely what they think. I like a Manly way of Conversation, a Familiarity which is neither Effeminate nor Ceremonious. That Friendship is not generous and vigorous enough, which is not a little quarrelsom. When one contradicts me, he rouses my Attention, not my Anger. The cause of Truth ought to be the common Cause, both of the one and the other. It were not amiss that our Disputes should be decided by Wager, that so we might have a material mark of our Losses, which would make us the better remember them, and that my Man might tell me, *Your Ignorance and Opiniatrety cost you twenty times an hundred Crowns the*

*last Year.* I embrace and care for Truth wheresoever I find it, and chearfully surrender up my conquer'd Arms unto it, as far off as I can discover it. I take pleasure in Rebukes, and very often yield to them, but rather out of Civility, than for any Amendment they produce, because I would cherish the freedom of Admonition, by my easiness of submitting to it. The far greater part of Men have not the courage to correct others, because they want the courage to suffer themselves to be corrected.

I rather choose to frequent the Company of those that ruffle me, than those that fear me. 'Tis a dull and hurtful pleasure to have to do with People that admire us, and approve of all we say. *An-tisthenes* commanded his Children never to take it kindly from any Man that commended them. I find I am much prouder of the Victory I obtain over my self, when,

when, even in the heat of Disputation, I make my self submit to the force of my Adversary's Reason, than I am pleas'd with the Victory I obtain over him thro his Weakness. 'Tis impossible to deal honestly and fairly with a Fool.

The Disputes that are manag'd with Heat and Passion, ought to be forbidden as well as other Crimes of the Tongue. We first quarrel with Men's Reason, and then with the Persons. We only learn to Dispute, that we may Contradict, and while every one contradicts another, and is contradicted by him again, it often falls out, that all the fruit of the Dispute is to lose and destroy the Truth. Take a Master of Arts, or a Doctor, strip him of his Gown, his Hood, and his Latine; let him not batter our Ears with *Aristotle*, (who is perfectly pure from Error, and entirely to be relied on, if you'll believe him) and you would take

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him for one of us, or rather some-  
thing worse: They are never the  
less Fools for being the more  
Learned. I love and honour  
Knowledge in its true and proper  
use; but I hate it, if I may so  
say, more than Stupidity, in those  
who know nothing but by Books,  
and owe all their Wit to their  
Memory: In the hand of some it  
is a *Scepter*, in that of others a  
*Fool's-Bauble*. There cannot be a  
greater Folly, than to be mov'd  
and disturb'd with the Follies of  
the World.

The Gravity, Robes, and For-  
tune of him that speaks, do often  
give Reputation to his idle and  
frivolous Talk. Tis not to be  
presum'd but a *Monsieur* so atten-  
ded and reverenc'd, must know  
more than the common People;  
and that he to whom the King  
has given so many Offices and  
Commissions, who is so Proud  
and Supercilious, must have a great  
deal more in him, than another  
that

in Sieur Montaigne's *Essays.* 173  
that salutes him at a great distance,  
and has no Employment at all :  
Not only the Words, but the ve-  
ry Gestures and Grimaces of these  
People are taken notice of, and  
well-weigh'd; and every one makes  
it his business to put a fine inter-  
pretation upon them, that they  
may be highly valu'd. 'Tis not  
enough for those who Govern  
and Command the World to have  
a common Understanding, and to  
be able to do what we can : They  
are very much below us, if they  
are not infinitely above us. We  
often see in the Transactions of the  
World, that Fortune, to shew us  
her Power in all things, and that  
she takes a pride to abate our Pre-  
sumption, finding herself unable  
to make Fools Wise, has there-  
fore made them more Fortunate,  
that they might be the Envy of  
Vertue. She pleases herself in  
promoting those Enterprizes which  
she manages by herself all alone.  
Most worldly Affairs are govern'd

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by Fortune; and Success does of-  
ten justifie an imprudent and foo-  
lish Conduct.

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*That Men are Idolaters of the  
Grandees.*

**T**here needs no more but to see a Man promoted to Dignity, tho we knew him but three days before a Man of no Esteem, yet our Mind is insensibly engag'd in his favour, by a new Idea we have of his Grandeur and extraordinary Abilities; and we perswade our selves, I know not how, that his Train and Reputation being encreas'd, he must encrease in Merit also. We judge of him, not according to his Value, but as we do of Counters, according to the prerogative of his Place. If it happen so that he fall again, and be mix'd with the common Crowd, every one enquires with

ad-

in Sieur Montaigne's *Essays*. 175  
admiration, *Whorais'd him so high?*  
*Is it he?* say they. *Do Princes*  
*satisfie themselves with so little?*  
*Really we were in good hands.* The  
very appearance and disguise of  
Grandeur represented in a Comedy,  
does in some sort move and  
deceive us. That which I admire  
most in the Fortune of Great Men,  
is the crowd of their Adorers.  
All Submission is due to Kings but  
that of the Understanding; my Reason  
is not oblig'd to bow and bend,  
tho my Knees are. The greatest  
part of the Nations of the Earth Ca-  
nonize the Kings whom they make,  
and they are not content only to  
Honour, but they also Adore them.  
Those of *Mexico*, after they have  
once chose their King, dare no  
more look him in the Face; and, as  
if they had Deify'd him by their  
Election, after the Oaths they  
make him take to maintain their  
Religion, Laws and Liberties, to  
be Valiant, Just and Mild; they  
oblige him also to Swear, That

he shall make the Sun run his Course, confine the Rivers within their Channels, cause the Clouds to pour down Rain at fit Seasons, and make the Earth fruitful of all things that shall be necessary to his People. But on the contrary, I am more apt to distrust any Man's Ability, when I see it accompanied with Grandeur, Fortune, and Popular Applauses.

When I have a mind to Judge of any one, I ask him, how much he is contented with himself; how far his own Discourses or Actions please him? I love none of these fine Excuses, *I did it only in sport*; *I was not an hour about it*; *I have never Revis'd it since*: Well then, say I, lay these Pictures aside, and give us one which will perfectly represent you, such a one by which you would be glad that I should measure you. A Man must have a care, said *Philip de Comines*, of doing his Master so great Service, that he shall not know how to give him his just Reward. A

*A Judgment upon Tacitus and  
other Writers.*

**W**HAT we have of *Tacitus* is rather a Judgment of things than an Historical Relation; there are in it more Precepts than Matters of Fact; 'tis not a Book to be read, but to be studied and learn'd; 'tis so full of Sentences, that in some of them there are unjust and oblique Insinuations.

There is not perhaps a more manifest Vanity than to Write vainly of Vanity itself. There ought to be Penal-Laws against frivolous and impertinent Scribblers, as there are against Vagabonds and idle Persons; which if there were, both I and a hundred others would be Banish'd the Kingdom. Scribbling seems to be a sign of a Licentious Age. Those Opinions are true and sound e-

nough for me, which are profitable and pleasant: I had rather be a good Horseman than a good Logician. The most honourable Employment is to serve the Publick, and be useful to many. Repetition is every-where troublesome, tho it were in *Homer*. I hate to inculcate too much the same things, as *Seneca* does, tho they be never so profitable. I would chuse rather to say nothing to the purpose, than to make show that I come prepared to speak well.

*A Character of a Man exempt from Ambition and Weakness.*

Princes give me a great deal, if they take nothing from me; and do me good enough, if they do me no harm; that's all I ask of them.

'Tis at once a Childish and In-human Humor to desire by our Sufferings to move the Compassion of our Friends: That firmness of Soul for which we so much commend others in bearing the Adversities of Fortune, we condemn in our Friends, when it relates to our own case; and are not satisfy'd that they should be sensible of our Misfortunes, unless they do also afflict them so far as to make them shed Tears. A Man must publish and communicate his Joy, but smother and conceal his Grief as much as he can. He that

com-

complains without Reason, is a Man not to be lamented when there shall be just Reason: To be always complaining, is the way never to be lamented; by making himself always in so pitiful a Talking, he is at last pitied by nobody. I have seen some take it ill, when they were told, That they look'd well, and their Pulse was moderate; who would contain their Smiles, because they would conceal their Recovery, and be angry at their Health, because it was a thing not to be lamented.

I would come again from the  
other World with all my Heart, to  
give him the Lye, who should re-  
present me to be another Man than  
I was, tho he did it to Honeur  
me.

Chief as much as possible. Helped  
you, but never any longer than necessary  
and building and construction  
and the like. A. W.  
make their best Toes.

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of

*Of different Customs, with respect to  
Wit and Conversation.*

Every Custom has its Reason, and I am ashamed to see our Frenchmen so besotted with this foolish Humor, as to quarrel with all Fashions contrary to their own: They seem to be out of their Element, when they are out of their own Village. Some of our Young Courtiers will not Converse with any but Men of their own Stamp: They look upon us as Men of the other World, with Disdain and Pity. Put them upon any Discourse but the Intrigues of the Court, and they are utterly at a loss; as very Owls and Novices to us, as we are to them. 'Tis truly said, That a well-bred Man is a Man of a mixed Temper, Sociable and Complaisant. I can relish no pleasure without Communication;

nication ; there's not so much as a sprightly Thought that comes into my Mind, but it troubles me that I have hit upon it alone, and that I have no body to Communicate it unto ; but yet 'tis much better to be alone than in Ill-company, and with a sort of foolish People that vex and weary you. There is scarce any satisfaction here below, but either for Brutish or Divine Souls.

When I am told , you ought not to suffer your selves to be transported by your Passions ; Live at ease, even under your Misfortunes ; I think it had been better to have told me in one word, *Be Wise* : As it would be more reasonable for a Physician to bid his Sick Patient *Be well*, than to advise him to be *Chearful*.

Of the same Sheet of Paper whereon the Judge has just now writ a Sentence of Condemnation against an Adulterer, he reserves to himself a piece where-

on to write a Love-Letter to his Colleague's Wife. She, with whom you have had unlawful Familiarity, will be the first that inveighs, even in your Presence, against the Licentiousness of her Companion, as if she were a *Porcia* or *Lucretia*. There are some who will condemn a Man to Death for such Crimes, which they themselves look upon to be no more than Trifles. We let the Law and Edicts keep their own way, while our selves keep another Course.

Do but hear a Philosophical Lecture, the Invention, Reasoning, Eloquence, good Sense, and *All that*, do immediately strike your Fancy, and move you; but there is nothing in it that smites your Conscience; it is not address'd to that. This made *Aristo* say, *That neither a Stove nor a Lecture did signify any thing, unless they Cleans'd and Purify'd Men.* One may stop at the outward Skin, but 'tis after the Marrow is pick'd out;

as

as after we have quaffed off the Wine out of a fine Bowl, we then consider the Engravning and Workmanship of it.

The Philosophers who Read us Lectures of Wisdom and Virtue, which they practise not themselves, are like our Physicians, who eat Melons, and drink ice't Wines, whil'st they confine their Patients to Syrups and Panades. I know not, said the Curtezan *Lais*, speaking of Philosophers, what they mean by their Books, nor wherein consists their Philosophy and Wisdom, but this sort of Men knock as often at my Door as any other. There's not a virtuous Man; but he's liable to be hang'd ten times in his Life, it all his Actions and Thoughts were to be examin'd by the Laws. We are so far from being Good, according to the Laws of God, that we cannot be so according to our own. Human Wisdom could never arrive at the Duty she prescribes to herself;

herself; and if she should arrive at it, she would still prescribe herself other things beyond it, to which she would always be aspiring, without ever being able to attain to them. I know not whether it be without Reason that I am disgusted with the World I frequent; but I know very well, it would be without Reason, if I should complain that it was disgusted with me, seeing I am so with it. The Virtue that is design'd for the Affairs of the World, is a Virtue that's pliable, full of Turnings and Tricks; a streight, simple and pure Virtue, is no ways suited for them. He that goes into the Crowd, must now go one way, and then another, keep his Elbows close, retire, advance, and even quit the direct Way, according to the Accidents he meets with; and must Live, not so much according to his own Method, as that of others; not according to what he proposes to himself,

himself, but according to what is propos'd to him; according to the Time, the Men, and the Occasions. Our Talents are so bounded, that he who could govern himself well, would be unfit to govern others; he that can order a Siege well, would but ill manage a Battle. *Saturninus* told those who conferr'd upon him the Command in Chief of the Army, *Companions, you have lost a good Captain, to make of him a bad General.* Great Wits are little less unfit for mean Things, than Little Wits are for great Matters.

I love Poetry that marches by Leaps and Jumps: 'Tis an Art, says *Plato*, that's light, volatile, and a little Enthusiastical. There are some who despise every thing they understand, and conclude the depth of Sense from the obscurity of a Discourse. *Aristotle* in his Writings, does somewhere boast, that he affected this Obscurity; which was certainly a vicious Affection.

fection. I am so enamour'd at the free, just and flourishing Estate of Old *Rome*, (for I neither love it in its Birth, nor Old Age) that I interest my self in it to a degree of Passion. I cannot without wonder review the Situation of its Streets and Housese, and the Ruins of its Empire, which descended even so low as to the *Antipodes*. Is it by Nature, or through Error of Imagination, that the sight of those Places, that we know have been inhabited by Illustrious Men, does more affect us, than the Rehearsal of their Actions, or the Reading of their Writings. *Rome* is the only common and universal City; the *Spaniards* and *French* are there at Home: To be of that City, there needs no more but to be a Christian: There is no place on Earth, that Heaven has honour'd with greater Favours; her very Ruins are Glorious and Magnificent, and she preserves still, even in her Grave,

*Of Moderation.*

THE great Art of a Man is so to manage his Will, as to espouse but a few things. In my Opinion he ought to carry an even Hand between the hatred of Pain, and the love of Pleasure; and tho he may lend himself to others, yet he should only give himself to himself. Do but observe such as have accustom'd themselves to be at every one's Call; they do it in all Cases, as well upon little as great occasions, in that which nothing concerns them, as much as in what imports them most. They intrude themselves indifferently wheresoever there is Business, and take pains tho they have only their labour for their pains. It is not so much that

that they have a mind to go, as because they cannot stand still. My Desires are moderate, and extend but to few things, and I make my Business as little and as easie as is possible. There are many dangerous Steps in this World, and therefore if we would be safe, we must gently slide through it, and not immerse our selves in Business; even Pleasure itself is Painful at the bottom. As he who should neglect to lead a Holy Life, on purpose to make others Saints, would be a very impertinent Man; so he that abandons the Pleasure of his own Life, to make others Happy, is no better than a Fool. I would not have any that take Employments upon them, to refuse their Attendance and Pains, their Eloquence, Sweat and Blood, when they are needful; but I would have them do all this in a free way, with a Mind always easie, and tho not without Action, yet without Passion. To be simply

ply doing, costs us so little, that we Act even in Sleeping. The eagerness and violence of our Desires, rather hinders than promotes the Execution of what we undertake. We never manage that Business well, which entirely possesses and governs us: But if a Man does freely employ his own Judgment and Address in any Affair, he proceeds more cheerfully, he counterfeits, gives way, delays all things at his ease, as occasions require. Precipitation Fetters it self, and Haste trips up its own Heels. Do but consider, that even in vain and frivolous Actions; as at Chels, Tennis, and the like Games, this eager and impetuous Desire of Gain spoils all; it dazles the Eyes, disorders the Mind, and entangles it self. The more moderate a Man is in his Play, with respect to Gain and Loss, the more he commands himself, and has always his Wits about him, the less Peevish and Passionate

Passionate he is, he plays so much the more advantageously and surely.

What Nature requires is so small a matter, that by its littleness it escapes the Gripes of Fortune. It were almost as good never to be a Man of Honour, as to become one too late, and in an extream old Age. To what purpose do I learn to live, when I am no longer to live? I have no need of Goods, which I can make no use of. To what end serves the Knowledge of the World, to one that has lost his Brains? 'Tis like assigning the part of an excellent Treble to a Chorister that has rotten Lungs, and the part of a great Orator, to a Hermit that has long been banish'd into the Desarts of *Arabia*. There needs no Art to further a Fall; the end is found of it self at the conclusion of every Affair. My World is come to a Period; my Lease is expir'd,

I am altogether past and gone;  
Time leaves me, without which  
nothing can be possess'd. The most  
part of our Employments are no  
better than Farces. We must play  
our part well, but still as the part  
of a borrowed Person. We must  
not make a real Essence of a Vizor  
and outward Appearance, nor of  
a strange Person our own. 'Tis  
enough to disguise our Face with  
Washes, our Breast should be  
preserv'd pure without disguise.  
I see some who transform them-  
selves into as many new Shapes  
and new Modes of Being, as they  
undertake new Offices and Em-  
ployments. They are proud all  
over, even to their very Liver  
and Guts, and carry their State  
along with them, even to the  
Close-stool. I cannot make them  
distinguish the Salutations that are  
made to *Them*, from those that  
are made to their *Commission*, their  
*Train*, or their *Mule*; they swell  
and puff up their Soul, and take  
upon

upon them a new Magisterial way of Talking, according to the Dignity of the Post to which they are advanc'd.

I am a mortal Enemy to this wicked way of Censuring; *He is of the League, for he admires the fine Mein of the Duke of Guise; He is mightily taken with the Activity of the King of Navar, and therefore he's a Hugonot; so he finds some fault in the King's Conduct, and therefore he's Seditious in his Heart.* Shall we not dare to say of a Thief, That he has a handsome Leg? If a Woman be a Strumpet, must it needs follow that she has a stinking Breath? There are a sort of People who distinguish nothing, and whom blind Passion so far transports, that they cannot perceive in their Enemies those good Qualities which are plainly visible; if they take a hatred against an Advocate, he shall not be allow'd the next day to have any Eloquence left him.

Most Accommodations of Quarrels, in our days, are shamefully manag'd, and made without Sincerity. We seek only to save appearances; we daub the Fact with false Colours, and disguise our true Intentions; we know how we said the thing, and in what Sense; and this is well enough known to our Friends, whom we would make sensible of our Advantage. 'Tis at the expence of our Liberty and Honour, that we disown our Thoughts; we give our selves the *Lye* to excuse the *Lye* we have given to another. Let us leave these vile Expedients to the Juggling Tricks of Lawyers. The Excuses and Satisfactions I see every day made for Indiscretion, appear to me more scandalous than the Indiscretion it self: It were better to affront your Adversary a second time, than to offer violence to your self, by making him such an unmanly Satisfaction.

Marble may exalt your Titles, as much as you please, for having repair'd a Rod of a ruinous Wall, or cleans'd a publick *Aquæduct*; but Men of Sense will not do so: If not for Conscience, yet for Ambition's sake, let us reject Ambition; let us disdain those Praises and Honours which are purchased at a cheap rate, by mean and unworthy Ways: 'Tis really a Dishonour to be so Honour'd. I distrust whatever makes a great noise, tho it be never so good; and am apt to suspect that it was done rather because it would make a Noise, than because it was good. These Actions have much more Grace and Lustre, which slip from a Man's Hand without any Care or Noise, and which a Man of Honour brings out of Obscurity, and exposes to the Light, out of a pure respect to their real worth. I commonly see, that Men in things proposed to them, more willingly study to find out the Reason of them,

them, than to find out the Truth; they slip over *Presuppositions*, but are curious in examining *Consequences*; they leave the *Things* and fly to the *Causes*; they commonly begin thus, *How is such a thing done?* Whereas they should say, *Is such a thing done?*

Private Error first makes the publick Error, and afterwards, in its turn, the publick Error is the cause of private Error.

Whoever believes a thing, thinks it a Work of Charity to perswade others to be of the same Opinion; and therefore he makes no scruple to add as much of his own Invention, as he thinks necessary to supply the Defect of Apprehension, and take off the Resistance he meets with in another. Our Sight does often represent to us strange Images at a distance, which vanish when we approach them. I never saw a greater Monster or Miracle in the World than my self: A Man grows familiar with

all

all strange and prodigious Things by Use and length of Time; but the more I know my self, the more I am astonish'd at my own Deformity, and the less I understand what I am. Very many, or to speak more boldly, all the Abuses in the World do spring from hence, That we are taught to be afraid of professing our Ignorance, and that we are bound to admit all things which we cannot refute. The Style of *Rome*, even when a Witness depos'd what he had seen with his Eyes, and a Judge decreed of his own certain Knowledge, was conceiv'd in this form of Words, *It seems*: This makes me hate those, who would impose upon me things probable, as infallibly true. I love these words which mollify and temper the rashness and boldness of our Propositions, such as, *Peradventure, in some sort, 'tis said, I think*, and the like. He that would cure his Ignorance, ought to confess it.

There is an Ignorance strong and generous, which is not inferiour in Honour and Courage to Knowledge ; an Ignorance, which, to conceive, requires no less Knowledge, than to conceive Knowledge it self.

I do not always speak by way of Discourse, neither should I speak so boldly, if it were my Due to be believ'd. No Man can stop in every Case, just at the point where he should : His Friendship is uncapable of Moderation ; in Curiosity, as well as Pleasure ; in Riches and Power, he grasps at more than he can hold. *Tacitus* had reason to commend the Mother of *Agricola*, for having restrain'd her Son in his too violent Thirst after Knowledge. I have taken pleasure to see, in some places, that Men vow'd Ignorance, as well as Charity, Poverty and Penance. We scarce need any Instruction to teach us how to live at our ease. All that strength

of Reason, which exceeds what is Natural, is in some sort vain and superfluous; and 'tis much, if it does not more burden and trouble us, than do us good. Do but recollect your self, and you'll find in your self Natural Arguments against Death, which are true and fit to serve you in time of need; such as are sufficient to make a Peasant, nay, and a whole Nation, die with as much Constancy, as a Philosopher. Should I have died less cheerfully before I had read Cicero's *Tusculan Questions*? I think not; and when I examine my self narrowly, I find that my Tongue is enrich'd indeed, but my Courage is no ways improv'd. Books have not so much serv'd me for Instruction, as Exercise. We ought to take heed that we call not that *Force*, which is only *Finery*; nor that *Solid*, which is only *Sparkling*; nor that *Good*, which is only *Beautiful*. Every thing that pleases, does not nourish.

Let us consider the poor People, who hang down their heads, and are intent upon the supply of their Wants; who know neither *Aristotle*, nor *Seneca*, neither *Example* nor *Precept*.: All that we attain to by studying with so much Care in the Schools, does not come near what they do by their Natural Endowments. Their Patience and their Constancy is more generous and more pure, than that of *Cato* and *Socrates*: How many of them have despis'd Poverty? How much have they desir'd Death, or endur'd it without Alarm or Regret? He that is now digging in my Garden, has this Morning Buried his Father or his Son. The very Names by which they call Diseases, soften the harshness of them. The *Ptyssick* is with them no more but a *Cough*, a *Bloody-flux* but a *Looseness*, a *Pleurisy* but a *Stitch*. And as they give them soft Names, so they meekly endure them. 'Tis a very strange

strange and grievous Disease which hinders their ordinary Labour, and they never keep their Beds but to die.

It pleases me to observe, how much Cowardise and Pusillanimity there is in Ambition; by how many mean and servile ways it must compass its End. There cannot a worse State of things be imagin'd, than where Wickedness is authoriz'd by publick Custom, and assumes, with the Magistrate's leave, the Cloak of Virtue. The extreamest sort of Injustice, according to *Plato*, is, when that which is Unjust, gains the Reputation of Justice.

The Beasts themselves do not always go exactly in the Path of Nature, but wherein they swerve from it, 'tis so little, that you may always see the Track. As Horses that are led make several Bounds and Curvets; but they are always within the length of their Halter. We trouble Life by the Care of

Death, and Death by the Care of Life; the one torments, the other frights us. 'Tis not against Death, which lasts but for a moment, that we make so much preparation, but against the melancholy Ceremonies that attend it. Philosophy prescribes, that we should always have Death before our Eyes; and then it afterwards gives us Rules, to hinder this Fore-sight and Meditation of Death from doing us any harm. Just so do Physicians who throw us into Diseases, that they may have whereupon to employ their Drugs and their Art. If we had never known how to Live, it were unjust to make us learn how to Die; but if we have known how to Live in constant Ease and Tranquility, we shall know how to Die so too.

Philosophers may boast as much as they please, *That the whole Life of a Philosopher is the Meditation of his Death.* But I fancy, tho it

it be the end, 'tis not the aim of his Life: 'Tis the *End* of it, its *Extremity*, but not its *Object*. That *Life* ought to be to herself; Her principal Aim, Design and Study, is to Order, Govern and Endure herself. Men differ much in their Sentiments and Strength; we must lead them to their own Good according to their Capacities, and by various Methods. I never saw any Country-man of my Neighbours concern himself to think one minute, after what manner he should pass over his last Hour: Nature teaches him not to dream of Death till he's Dying, and then he does it with a better Grace than *Aristotle*, upon whom Death presses with a double weight, both of itself, and of so long a Premeditation. It belongs only to Doctors to frown and be enrag'd at the Image of Death, and to Dine worst when they are in best Health; the common sort of People stand in need

of no Remedy nor Consolation, but just in the Shock, in the very moment of Death it self ; and then they consider no more than just what they endure. Is it because their Souls being more Gross and Dull, are so much the less sensible ? If so, then, in God's Name, let us set up a School to teach nothing but Stupidity, since *That* does so gently lead its Disciples to that happy Temper, which is all the advantage we can promise our selves from the most improved Knowledge. 'Tis much more easy to speak like Aristotle, and live like Cæsar, than to speak and live as *Socrates* did ; every thing in him was so Natural and Perfect, that no Art could reach it. There is a certain noble Simplicity, which far excels all Learning and Valour.

*Socrates* call'd Beauty a short Tyranny, and *Plato* calls it the Privilege of Nature. We have nothing that surpasses it in Reputation :

tion: It prepossesses our Judgment, and seduces our Heart. *Phryne* had lost her Cause in the Hands of an excellent Advocate, if by showing her Face she had not corrupted her Judges with the lustre of her Beauty. I find that *Cyrus*, *Alexander* and *Cesar*, the three Masters of the World, never neglected Beauty in the Conduct of their great Affairs, to gain their Ends by it. The same word in Greek signifies both *Fair* and *Good*, and the Holy Ghost often calls Men *Good*, meaning such as are *Fair*. I should willingly maintain the way of ranging the things call'd *Goods*, according to the Song taken out of some ancient Poet, which *Plato* calls *Trivial*; *Health*, *Beauty* and *Riches*. *Aristotle* says, that the Right of Commanding belongs to the Beautiful, and that when there is a Beauty that comes near to that of the Gods, or their Images, we cannot have too great a veneration for it.

Of

## Of Physnomy.

**A** Man's Mien is but a feeble Warranty; for wicked Men, who have something noble and agreeable in their Looks, bely and falsify the Promises which Nature has written on their Foreheads. For my part I should punish with greater severity, that Malice which is conceal'd under a mild and gentle Aspect, and the outward appearance of Goodness. It seems as if there were some happy, and some unlucky Faces; and I believe there is some Art in discerning Countenances; the Mild from the Dull, the Severe from the Rude, the Malicious from the Peevish, the Scornful from the Melancholick, and in distinguishing suchlike bordering Qualities. There are Beauties which are not only Bold,

Bold but Sowre, and others that are Sweet, but withal Faint.

Words repeated and reported have, as it were, another sound and sense than what they had at first. If they are innocent in themselves, they do not offend when they come from the mouth of him that first utters them; but when they pass through the mouth of another, then they are chang'd and become offensive. There is no desire more natural than that of Knowledge; we try all ways that can lead us to it, and where Reason fails, we make use of Experience.

*Of LAWS.*

They who think to curb the Authority of Judges by the multitude of Laws, do not consider that there is as much liberty in interpreting the Laws, as in making them, in glossing upon them, as inventing them. We have in *France* more Laws than in all the rest of the World besides, and more than would be necessary for the Government of all the Worlds of *Epicurus*. What have our Lawgivers got by culling out an hundred thousand particular Cases, to which they have adjusted an hundred thousand Laws? This number bears no proportion with the infinite diversity of human Actions. There is little Affinity between our Actions, which are in perpetual change, and the Laws, which of themselves are

fix'd

fix'd and unmoveable. The most desireable are the most simple and plain: Nature always gives them better and more for our advantage, than those we make for our selves: witness the Picture of the Golden Age of the Poets, and the State wherein we see those Nations live that have no other than the Laws of Nature. There are some that take for their Judge the first Passenger that Travels along their Mountains; and others, who on their Market-day, choose out some one amongst them, that presently decides all their Controversies.

When King Ferdinand sent Colonies into the *Indies*, he made this wise Provision, That they should not carry along with them any Students of the Long-Robe, for fear lest Suits should take footing in that new World, judging, with *Plato*, that Lawyers and Physicians are the Pest of a Country. Whence comes it to pass, that our common Language, which is so easie and clear

for

for all other Uses, becomes so obscure and unintelligible in Wills and Contracts? Whence is it, but that the Doctors of the Civil Law, by criticizing too much upon Words, by straining each Sylable, but chiefly by crafty and deceitful Tricks, and spinning out the Law into many subtle Questions, have taught Men to doubt of those things which were out of doubt before. Thus Learning begets Difficulties and Doubts, and the number of Doctors serves only to encrease them. We doubted of *Ulpian*, and are now more perplex'd about *Bartolus* and *Baldus*. So many different Interpretations do dissipate and weaken the Truth. Of one Subject we make a thousand, and by Multiplying and Subdividing them, we reduce them to the infinite Atoms of *Epicurus*. Never did two Men make the same judgment of the same Thing, and 'tis very rare to find two Opinions exactly alike, not only in several

in Sieur Montaigne's *Essays*. 211  
several Men, but in the same Man  
at different Hours. The Glosses and  
Commentaries encrease Doubts  
and Ignorance, especially by their  
*Chicanery*. After so many Books,  
so many Arrests, and so many Inter-  
pretations, do we stand in need  
of fewer Advocates and Judges,  
than when this great Mass of the  
Law was yet in its first Infancy?  
There's more ado to Interpret Inter-  
pretations, than to Interpret  
Things, and there are more Books  
upon Books, than upon a Thou-  
sand other Subjects. We do no-  
thing but Gloss upon one another,  
and glut the World with abun-  
dance of Commentaries, when  
there are but very few Original  
Authors. Is it not the principal  
and most reputable Knowledge  
of our Age, to know how to un-  
derstand the Learned? Our Opin-  
ions are grafted one upon an-  
other; the first serves for a stock  
to the second, the second to the  
third, and so on: Thus step by  
step

step we climb up ; from whence it comes to pass, that he who is mounted highest, has often more Honour than Merit.

I ask what *Nature* is? what *Pleasure, Circle and Substitution* are? The Question is about Words, and it is Answer'd accordingly. A Stone, say they, is a Body : But if a Man should urge further, and, *What is a Body?* A Substance, they'll tell you ; and then further, *What is Substance?* he will at last drive the Respondent to a Non-plus. Thus in course we define one word by another, and frequently by one that's less understood. I know better what *Man* is, than I know what *Animal* is, or *Mortal*, or *Rational*. To satisfie one doubt, do not they pop me in the mouth with three? 'Tis the very *Hydra's Head*. *Socrates* ask'd *Memnon* what Virtue was: There is, says *Memnon*, The Virtue of a Man and of a Woman, of a Magistrate and of a private Person, of an Old Man and.

in Sieur Montaigne's *Essays.* 213  
and of a Child. Very well, cry'd  
*Socrates*; we were in quest of one  
Vertue, and thou hast brought us  
a whole swarm.

If our Faces were not alike, we  
could not distinguish a Man from  
a Beast; if they were not unlike,  
we could not distinguish one Man  
from another: So ingenious is Na-  
ture in her Mixtures.

How many innocent Persons  
have we known who have been  
punish'd, I say, without the Judge's  
Fault? And how many more are  
there that never came to our know-  
ledge? How many Sentences have  
I seen more Criminal, than the  
Crimes themselves! which brings  
to my mind the ancient Opinions,  
*That he who will do Right in gross,*  
*must do Wrong in retail;* *that he who*  
*would come at Justice in great Mat-*  
*ters, will be oblig'd to do Injustice*  
*in little Things;* *that human Ju-*  
*stice is form'd after the Model of*  
*Physick, according to which, every*  
*thing that is Profitable, is also Just*  
*and*

and Honest ; that Nature herself proceeds sometimes contrary to the Rules of Justice ; in fine, That there is nothing just in it self ; that Laws and Customs make Justice. My Life and Honour does more depend upon the Care and Industry of my Attorney, than upon my own Innocence. Tho I be never so Innocent, I shall be Hang'd if he does not his Duty. The Laws keep up their Credit, not because they are Just, but because they are Laws. This is the mystical Foundation of their Authority, and they have no other. I find enough to make me Wise, by the Experience I have of my self, provided I know how to make use of it. Whosoever will call to mind the excess of his past Anger, and to what a degree that Fever transported him, will learn better the deformity of that Passion in himself than in *Aristotle*. He that remembers how many and many times he has been mistaken in his

own

own Judgment, Is he not a Fool if he does not ever after mistrust it ?

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*Thoughts upon divers Subjects.*

TO learn that a Man has said or done a foolish thing, is nothing worth ; we must learn that a Man is nothing but a Fool, which is a Lesson much more important, and of more general use. There is none of us that would not be worse than Kings, if we were continually beset with Flatterers, and corrupted, as they are, with that sort of Vermine. Princes above all other Men do most stand in need of true and free Advertisements, but are least in a condition to receive them.

What shall we do with those Men, who admit of no Testimonies if not Printed, and will not believe Men, but when they speak in

in Books, nor Truth it self unless it be of a competent Age? We promote our Fooleries to Dignity when we commit them to the Pres. 'Tis of much more weight with some People to say, *I have read such a thing*, than if you only say, *I have heard such a thing*: But for my own part, I who know that Men Write as indiscreetly as they Speak, and esteem this Age as much as those that are past, do as readily quote one of my own Friends, as *Aulus Gellius*, or *Macrobius*: I think that *Truth* is not the Wiser for being Older. I say often, that 'tis great Folly, to hunt after Strange and Scholar-like Examples: But is it not that we seek to derive more Honour from the Quotation, than from the Truth of the Discourse? As if it were more Reputable to borrow our Proofs from the Shops of *Vascosan* and *Plantin*, than from what is to be seen in our own Village; or rather, indeed, that

we

we have not the Wit to examine nicely what we see before us, and make it useful, and that we cannot judge of it exactly enough to draw a Proof from it.

Beggars have their Magnificence and Pleasures as well as the Rich; and, as 'tis said, they have their Dignities, and Rules of Policy. The worst quality in a well-bred Man is Delicacy in Eating, and a flavish adherence to one particular way of Living. A Man should follow the best Rules, but he ought not to enslave himself to them. Publick Lives are bound up to Ceremony, but mine being obscure and private, enjoys all Natural Dispensation from it. *Soldier* and *Gascon* are Qualities a little subject to Indiscretion.

I do not love to Cure one Disease by another; and I hate Remedies that are more troublesome

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than the Disease it self. To be subject to the Cholick, and to abstain from the pleasure of eating Oysters, are two Evils instead of one. The Tone and Motion of my Voice carries with it a great deal of the Expression and Signification of my Meaning, and accordingly ought to be diversified. There is a Voice to Flatter, and a Voice to Reprove. I would not only have my Voice reach him whom I am angry with, but also strike and pierce him. Speaking is half his that Speaks, and half his that Hears; and the latter ought to prepare himself to receive it according to its Motion and Impulse.

We must neither rashly and obstinately oppose Evils, nor cowardly and effeminately truckle under them; but we must so compose our Minds, that Nature may give way to them, according to their Condition and our own. Let

Let us a little permit Nature to take her own way: She understands her own Affairs better than we do. We are Born to grow Old, and to be Sick, in spite of all Medicine. 'Tis the first **Lesson** the *Mexicans* teach their **Children**: When they come out **of** their Mother's Womb, they thus **Salute** them; *Child, Thou art come into the World to Suffer, Suffer and hold thy Peace.* When an Old Man begs of God a vigorous Health, 'tis much the same as if he should beg Youth of him. The Gout, the Stone and Indigestion, are Symptoms of a great Age, as Heats, Rains and Winds are of long Voyages. My good Friend, your Business is done; no-body can restore you; they can at the most but patch you up, and prop you a little. We must learn to suffer what we cannot avoid: He that is afraid of Suffering, Suffers already from his own Fear. Besides Old-Age,

which is an undoubted sign of approaching Death, I see few other Accidents which are certain signs of Futurity. If others excel you in Beauty, Wit and Fortune, you may blame other Causes for that: But if you be inferior to them in firmness of Soul, you can blame nothing for that but your self. Death is more inglorious, more languishing and painful, in a *Bed* than in a *Battle*; and *Fevers* and *Catarrhs* are as painful and mortal as a *Musquet-shot*. He that could generously endure the common Accidents of Life, would not need a new Courage to make him a Soldier.

God is favourable to those whom he removes out of this Life by degrees; 'tis the only benefit of Old-Age to dye gradually: The last Death will be so much the less strong and painful, because it will Kill but a half, or a quarter of

in Sieur Montaigne's *Essays*. 221  
of the Man. The most usual and common way of Living is most becoming, and all Singularity, in my opinion, is to be avoided: I should hate as much a *German* that mix'd Water with his Wine, as I should a *Frenchman* that drank it pure. There were Masters at *Rome* that taught People to Chew, as well as to Walk, with a good Grace. There is a sort of Jealousie between our several Pleasures, which makes them cross and hinder one another. *Alcibiades*, a Man that understood good-Eating, banish'd even Musick from Tables, that it might not disturb the Entertainment of Discourse; which Reason he borrow'd from *Plato*, who says, *That 'tis the custom of the Common People, to call Players upon Instruments and Singing-men to Feasts, for want of that agreeable Conversation, wherein Men of Wit know how to regale one another.*

That Prince was a Fop, who being immers'd in all sorts of Pleasure, propos'd a Reward to him that should find him out new ones: But, to speak naturally, he is no less a Fop, who retrenches all the Pleasures that Nature has provided for him, even those that are most innocent. A Man should neither pursue, nor flie, but receive them. We need not exaggerate their Vanity, they themselves will make us sufficiently sensible of it. Thanks to our sickly Minds which put us out of conceit with them, as we are sometimes with our selves.

I cannot endure that we should be enjoyn'd to have our Minds in the Clouds, when our Bodies are at Table. I would not have the Mind nail'd down there, nor wallow in sensual Pleasures; but I would have it present there, and try

try them, tho not rest in them. *Aristippus* maintain'd nothing but the Body, as if he had no Soul; *Zeno* stickled only for the Soul, as if we had no Body: The true Mean is found in *Socrates*; *When I Dance I Dance, when I Sleep I Sleep.* We are great Fools to say, He has spent his Life in Ease, I have done nothing to Day: Why, have you not Liv'd? This is not only the Foundation, but the most noble of all your Employments, provided you live like a good Man. Have you known how to order your Conversation? You have done more than he that has Written Books. Have you known how to take Repose? You have done more than he that has taken Cities and Empires. The glorious Master-piece of Man is to Live to purpose: All other things, as to amass Wealth, to Build, to Conquer, to Reign, are far inferior to it. They are but little

little Souls that are oppress'd with the weight of their Affairs, and cannot disengage themselves; that know not how to leave things, and take them up again. *Brutus*, when Heaven and Earth conspir'd against him, would steal some Hour of the Night from his *Rounds* to Read *Polybius*.

Greatness of Soul does not so much consist in the Elevation and Sublimity of Thought, as in knowing how to Govern and Circumscribe itself: It takes every thing for Great that is Enough, and demonstrates its Excellency, by loving moderate Things, better than those that are high and lofty. There is nothing so handsom and lovely as duly to play the Man, and finish the Business of our Station. There's no Science so difficult, as that of knowing well how to Live; and of all the sickly Fancies

cies we have, the most Savage, is that of despising our own Being.

Intemperance is the Pest of Pleasure, but Temperance is its best seasoning. I enjoyn my Soul to look upon Pain and Pleasure with a just and impartial Eye; but the one I view merrily, the other severely.

*Alexander* said, that the end of his Labour, was to Labour.

Those that raise themselves too high above the pitch of human Nature, and so would escape from being Men, and after some manner get rid of themselves, are guilty of great Folly; for instead of transforming themselves into Angels, they transform themselves into Beasts; instead of elevating, they debase themselves. These transcendent Humors affright me, like

like the sight of very high and inaccessible Precipices.

Philotas congratulated Alexander for the Oracle of Jupiter Hammon, who had plac'd him among the Gods: *Upon thy account* (said he) *I am glad of it; but these Men are to be pitied, who are to live with a Man, that's not content with the Measures of Human Nature, and who are so much the more to obey him.*

"Tis an Absolute, and, as it were, Divine Perfection, for a Man to know how to enjoy his own Being. We hunt after other Conditions, because we do not understand the use of our own; and go out of our selves, because we know not what our selves are. After all, tho we count it brave to be rais'd upon Stilts, yet still we must walk upon our Legs: And when we are seated upon the highest.

highest Throne in the World, we still Sit upon our Breech. The fairest Lives, in my opinion, are those, which regularly accommodate themselves to the common Model of Human Nature, without Miracles, and without extravagant Humors.

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*F I N I S.*

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## ERRATA.

Page 49. Line 8. for have r. love. p. 93. l. 3.  
after there r. are. p. 97. l. 18. for *Insolent* r.  
*Impudent*, ib. l. 23. for as I turned my self about r.  
*the turns of my Fancy*. p. 112. l. 19 for *Wit* r.  
*Mind*. p. 113. l. 20. for *former* r. *latter*, ib. l. 24.  
for *latter* r. *former*. p. 119. for *and* r. *nor*. p. 128.  
l. penult, after *given* r. *than to Man*. p. 163. l. 4.  
after *otherwise* r. *Free*. p. 172. l. 13. for *a make*  
*make a*. p. 182. l. 14. for *selves* r. *self*. p. 144.  
l. 4. for *an able Man is sufficient throughout* r. a  
*Man of Sense is never at a loss*.



